

Badia deputy withdraws resignation
AMMAN (Petra) — Northern Badia District Deputy Trad Saud Al Qadi said Friday he had decided to withdraw his resignation from the Lower House of Parliament. Deputy Trad said his decision was upon a request from his supporters in Mafrag, Irbid, Jerash, the Jordan Valley, Northern Badia and Ramtha. Mr. Qadi, at a press conference on Sept. 23, announced his resignation and that he was unable to serve his constituents through the legislature because of what he described as government's refusal to cooperate with him. In an interview published in the Shihaan weekly Thursday, Deputy Qadi said he resigned in protest against the policies of the government of Abdul Karim Kabariti. He described the government as arrogant and accused it of discriminating against his constituency after he joined the opposition over the issue of bread subsidies. He demanded in the interview that Mr. Kabariti government resign because "it became arrogant ... and started to feel bigger than the regime."

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Jordan Times

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جوردان تلیمز یومیه سیاسیة مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي

KDP announces release of 12 rivals
DUBAI (AFP) — Iraq's Kurdish ally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), said Friday it has released 12 political and military officials from a rival faction. The KDP, headed by Massoud Barzani, said it released the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) officials, including politburo member Fuad Massoum, in order to "strengthen the spirit of reconciliation" between the factions. The KDP spokesman said in a statement sent to Dubai that these officials were "detained in a Salahuddin hotel" after Erbil fell to KDP forces backed by Iraqi troops on Aug. 31. After extending its control throughout most of northern Iraq in the last month, the KDP decreed Sept. 10 a general amnesty for its Kurdish rivals. "Barzani on Sept. 25 met Fuad Massoum and decided to free the 12 prisoners who have the choice of staying in Kurdistan or leaving (to go) abroad," the statement said.

Israeli army storms Al Aqsa, kills 4 Palestinians

Two others and two Israeli soldiers killed in West Bank; Overall death toll rises to nearly 60 Palestinians, 13 Israelis

Combined agency dispatches



Critically wounded Palestinian worshippers are treated in a makeshift infirmary inside Al Aqsa Mosque after they were shot by Israeli soldiers who stormed the mosque on Friday (Reuters photo)

Israel under fire at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Russia criticised Israel for stalling the Middle East peace process on Friday and urged both sides in the erupting Israeli-Palestinian crisis to back away from confrontation.

"Russia urges strongly all the interested parties to show maximum restraint and to avoid action that would worsen the situation," Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov told a U.N. Security Council meeting in New York.

Mr. Primakov urged Israel's new right-wing government to implement previous agreements with the Palestinians and said the latest crisis was a "direct result of reckless activity."

Russia, a co-sponsor of Middle East peace efforts with the United States, supported the desire of Arab states to have a U.N. Security Council meeting in New York.

Jordan urges implementation of all Israeli-Palestinian agreements and resumption of talks on other tracks

King calls for establishing full facts related to Israel's opening of tunnel in Jerusalem

AMMAN (Agencies) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said Friday the only way to end the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli crisis was the implementation of all agreements signed between Israel and the Palestinians as well as the resumption of and achievement of progress in the peace negotiations on other tracks.

Mr. Kabariti was speaking during a visit he paid to the Palestinian embassy here to convey his condolences and those of the government over the deaths of dozens of Palestinians in clashes with the Israeli army over the past three days.

Mr. Kabariti reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) position. He described Israeli actions at the Al Aqsa Mosque as provocative to the Arabs and Muslims.

His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday reaffirmed Jordan's concern over the safety of the religious shrines in Jerusalem and called for an international probe to determine any damages caused by the opening of a tunnel adjoining the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in the Holy City.

"Jerusalem is in our hearts and our conscience all the time, and it is our duty to do the impossible to prevent any tampering with its holy places and to ensure their safety," said King Hussein at a meeting with ministers of Aqaf of nine Islamic countries who were holding a meeting in Amman.

The King called on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to create an enquiry commission group-

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat says Israel broke agreement to curb violence; Netanyahu maintains PLO leader instigated unrest

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIAN LEADER Yasser Arafat accused Israel on Friday of breaking an agreement to prevent clashes in self-rule areas from spreading to Jerusalem, where Israeli-Palestinian violence continued for a third day.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Mr. Arafat of instigating the deadly

clashes in the West Bank and Gaza, but said he was willing to resume the peace process if the Palestinians laid down their guns.

The bloodshed in Jerusalem city was "a violation of what we agreed last night, to maintain calm in Jerusalem," Mr. Arafat said after meeting Israel's former Environment Minister Yossi Sarid.

"We cannot accept that they try to attack the faithful at the mosque," Mr. Arafat told reporters, referring to Israeli soldiers who killed four demonstrators after Friday prayers in Al Aqsa Mosque, raising the overall death toll to more than 70.

Mr. Sarid praised the Palestinian president's efforts to halt the clashes triggered by Israel's excavation last week of an archaeological tunnel skirting Al Aqsa.

"In these very difficult times, we must maintain our relations," Mr. Sarid said. "I have been able to observe the very, very serious efforts of the president to calm the situation."

Mr. Arafat has accused Israeli troops of carrying out a massacre in the Gaza Strip and West Bank on Thursday. He spoke by telephone Thursday and Friday with Mr. Netanyahu but a summit between the two leaders has

(Continued on page 7)

Taleban seize Kabul, sets up government

KABUL (Agencies) — The fundamentalist Taleban movement captured the Afghan capital Kabul and formed a provisional government Friday, summarily executing the country's former communist president Najibullah and vowing to establish a strict Islamic state.

The Taleban met minimal resistance from forces loyal to Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and President Burhanuddin Rabbani when they swept into Kabul around 1:00 a.m. (2130 GMT) to take the presidential palace in the city centre.

It was the crowning moment of a lightning two-year crusade by the student-led militia to impose Islamic law on the war-ravaged country.

Ex-President Najibullah and his bodyguard were dragged out of the United Nations office where they had sheltered for the past four and a half years and ransacked on a public street.

Najibullah had been under U.N. protection since his six-year rule, which

began under Soviet occupation and ended with sweeping rebel victories in 1992.

Tens of thousands of people crushed to see the bodies after they were strung up the main Ariana Square. The Taleban said Najibullah was executed for being a murderer and a communist (see page 12).

The United Nations sharply condemned the hanging.

The three-day battle for the city left several hundred people killed or injured and hospitals were overflowing in the city of one million inhabitants, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Low explosions were heard in the night as retreating government forces blew up stocks of ammunition they could not carry away to their strongholds in the north.

Jeep-loads of Taleban drove north out of Kabul Friday in search of fleeing government commanders.

The presence of the Taleban in Kabul was

King: Talk of change of government is baseless

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has ruled out any change in the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and described talk on such change as premature, mere speculation and baseless.


"Any talk on a new government is premature, a mere speculation and baseless," King Hussein told reporters during a visit to Doha on Thursday.

The King's comments came against the backdrop of renewed demands by the opposition for the resignation of the Kabariti government. In a statement issued on Wednesday, 23 members of the 80-seat Lower House of Parliament called on the King to dismiss the government.

In reply to a question on Jordanian relations with Gulf Arab states, the King said in Doha: "We work for bettering the lives of all people and to solve outstanding problems."

Answering a question on a Bahraini-Qatari territorial dispute over some islands in the Gulf, the King

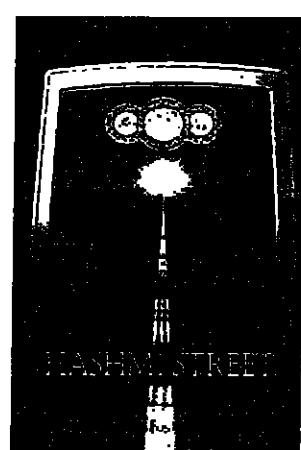
(Continued on page 3)



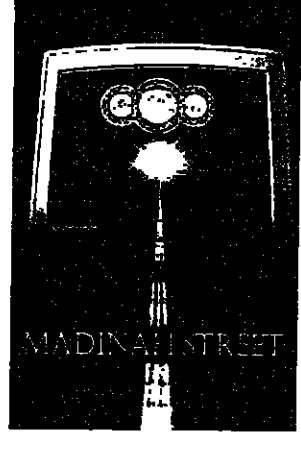
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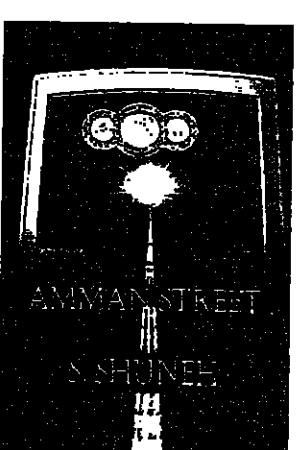
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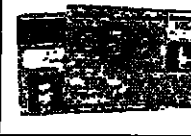



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Iraq accuses Washington of delaying oil-for-food deal for political reasons

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — An Iraqi official has accused the United States of delaying the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal for political reasons, and France is urging the U.N. secretary-general to give the final go-ahead to the plan despite American reservations about its implementation.

Iraqi deputy U.N. Ambassador Saeed Hassan said the allegation late Wednesday during the general assembly debate in response to a statement by Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos.

Mr. Poos said in his speech to the General Assembly that Luxembourg "condemns the recent, threatening attacks by the government of Saddam Hussein against the Kurdish population of northern Iraq."

Referring to the delay in implementation of the oil-for-food plan, Mr. Poos said it was "inevitable that measures were taken in reaction to the new offensive."

In response to Mr. Poos' statement, Mr. Hassan said in rebuttal that there are forces "who are delaying the implementation of this formula for election purposes...and here, we mean the United States of America."

Iraq has been barred from exporting oil under sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. The oil-for-food plan

would allow Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil for 180 days in order to buy food and medicine.

Iraqi officials accepted the deal last May. The plan was on the verge of going into effect when Baghdad sent troops into northern Iraq on Aug. 31 to support Kurdish allies against the Iranian-backed popular union of Kurdistan.

The U.S. Denied Iraqi accusations that domestic politics were behind its decisions on the oil plan.

"It's simply not true," Edward Gnehm, the deputy U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, said Wednesday.

Mr. Gnehm — who had not heard Mr. Hassan's comments and was speaking generally about such Iraqi charges — said the U.S. is committed to the oil-for-food plan but, "in our view the event that has made implementation more difficult is Iraqi military moves into the north."

Some European diplomats and oil analysts have said they doubt the plan will be implemented until after the U.S. presidential election in November.

On Wednesday, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau told a congressional committee that conditions in northern Iraq are still too volatile to proceed with the oil-for-food plan.

Mr. Pelletreau also said there could be "substantial

delays" in implementation but the plan would "get back on track fairly quickly" if the situation in northern Iraq stabilises.

On Wednesday, a U.S. spokesman confirmed that French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette has written Mr. Ghali to move ahead on the delayed U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal.

Mr. De Charette's letter was not made public. But U.N. Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi confirmed that it called for action on the plan. France has been one of the leading proponents of the oil-for-food plan.

Mr. Ghali on Sept. 1 delayed deployment of personnel needed to implement the plan after Iraqi military forces moved against a Kurdish faction in northern Iraq.

The United Nations has not given any time frame for when the plan may be implemented. But diplomats have said they do not believe it will be in place before the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential elections.

Apart from the deployment of personnel, other outstanding issues in the oil sale are the Americans' continuing consideration of the method for pricing the oil and the issuance of a required license from the U.S. Treasury for the French bank that will handle an escrow account for the plan out of its New York office.



Palestinian president Yasser Arafat consoles a Palestinian child at a hospital in Gaza City, after he was injured during clashes in the Gaza Strip between Palestinian forces and Israeli troops (Reuters photo)

ICJ, Amnesty deplore violence, urge Israel, Palestinians to adopt dialogue

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — At least two international organisations have raised alarm over the violence in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Palestinian territories and called for restraint, particularly on the part of the Israeli army.

In statements issued over the weekend, the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the London-based Amnesty International condemned the armed battles between the Israeli army and Palestinians.

The ICJ particularly assailed Israel's "indiscriminate and excessive use of force against Palestinians within the Palestinian autonomous areas."

Amnesty International did not outrightly criticise Israel. Instead, it demanded "that all members of the security forces abide by international human rights and protect the lives of civilians who do not threaten the lives of others."

The reference to civilians was an implicit criticism of the Israeli army. Only Israeli soldiers have died in the gunbattles while most of the Palestinians killed were civilians.

Both Amnesty International and the ICJ specifically referred to Israel's use of helicopter gunships against the Palestinians.

"For far too long the world has tried to ignore the evidence of human rights abuses in the area in its search for peace," Amnesty International Pierre Sane said in a statement, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times. "This tragic situation clearly demonstrates that peace can only be built by real respect for human rights and that particularly in time of armed conflict human rights must not be postponed or neglected."

"The right to life and physical integrity is a basic and fundamental right," Amnesty said and quoted the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms

by Law Enforcement officials: "The intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life."

The ICJ was more outright in condemning Israel by referring to "the illegal use of force by the Israeli military against the Palestinian civilians..."

It noted that the September 1995 agreement between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) require the Palestinian police and the Israeli military to exercise their powers and responsibilities "with due regard to internationally-accepted norms of human behaviour and the rule of the law."

"The indiscriminate and excessive use of force by the Israeli military violates international human rights and humanitarian law," said the ICJ. "First, Israeli forces have been firing on Palestinian civilians while they were still within the Palestinian-controlled areas. Second, the force used has been indiscriminate as it has not been directed against a specific military objective, nor has it been limited."

"Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are prohibited under international law," it noted.

"Third, the use of force has been disproportionate. Use of force is permitted under international law only if it is necessary and proportionate to the posed threat," the organisation added.

The ICJ called on the Israeli government "to immediately respect international law by ordering its forces to desist from using indiscriminate and excessive force."

It also urged the international community "to ensure that the government of Israel respect international law," and appealed to "both parties (Israelis and Palestinians) to cease firing and negotiate an effective conclusion to the conflict."

Germany says no nuclear cooperation with Iran

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Germany is not helping Iranian develop nuclear technology but will continue pursuing a "critical dialogue" with the Islamic government, a German spokesman said Thursday.

"There is no German nuclear cooperation with Iran, not even in the civilian sector," German Foreign Minister Martin Erdmann told the Associated Press.

The question of Germany's economic ties with Iran is one of the issues dividing the Bonn government and the United States.

On Wednesday, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas McNamara, head of the state department's political-military affairs bureau, said Germany is unwittingly helping Iranian develop nuclear bombs.

Later, a spokesman for Mr. McNamara issued a statement saying that Mr. McNamara did not intend to imply that there is any civil nuclear cooperation between Germany and Iran. The spokesman said Mr. McNamara was referring to civil nuclear cooperation by any state with Iran.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel met Wednesday with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati as part of a series of consultations during the U.N. General Assembly session.

Following Wednesday's meeting with Mr. Velayati, German officials told reporters the two countries want to pursue a "critical dialogue" despite political differences and a controversy over an on-going murder case in Berlin.

An Iranian "and" four Lebanese men are on trial there for the September 1992 slaying of Iranian Kurdish leader Sadiq Sharafkandi and three aides in the Mykonos Restaurant.

Former Iranian President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, who has lived in exile in France since being overthrown 15 years ago, claims Iranian's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei signed the order to assassinate Sharafkandi.

Iran has consistently denied any role in the killing. But German federal prosecutors have issued a warrant for Iranian intelligence chief Ali Fallahian on charges he ordered the slayings.

Iran has threatened to take Germany to court for allegedly helping Iraq develop chemical weapons in the 1980s if the Berlin court finds the Tehran government was involved in the Mykonos killings.

Algerian population will reach nearly 29 million in 1997 — official figures

Unemployment a major problem for trouble-hit country

PARIS (R) — Algeria's population will swell by 600,000 this year to reach 28.9 million in January 1997, adding to problems of overcrowding and unemployment, latest figures from the Algerian national office of statistics show.

The oil and gas producing country's workforce was estimated at 5,388,660, representing 19 per cent of the January 1996 population of 28.3 million, according to the figures carried on Thursday in the Algerian newspaper Liberte.

Some 80 per cent of the estimated 2.1 million of unemployed were aged under 30 years, and just over 77 per cent of the jobless were men. Unemployment is seen as one of the major irritants fuelling

civil strife and violence in the country over the past nearly-five years.

Underlining changes in the fabric of Algerian society, the jobless rate among women rose by nearly 400 per cent in the past three years to reach 478,000 unemployed in 1995.

Given the increased numbers of women graduates in the wake of massive state-funded education, more Algerian women sought jobs while more than five million of them were counted as unpaid housewives.

Turning to another factor which has contributed to Algeria's social crisis, the national office of statistics said nine out of 10 families lived in crowded accommodation.

Forty per cent of Algeria's stock of 3.7 million

officially tabled dwellings were occupied by families of up to 10 people, the office said.

The government sees the housing crisis, with a shortage of more than 2.0 million units, and the jobless problem, as the main challenges in the next decade.

It is trying to relaunch the economy amid civil strife blamed on Muslim guerrillas in which an estimated 50,000 people have died.

Earlier this month, it said 140,000 jobs had been created in 1995 and that gross domestic product (GDP) grew more than 4.0 per cent that year and in the first half of 1996, reversing falls in the previous seven years.

Car-bomb blast in Algeria kills 15, wounds 78

ALGIERS (AFP) — Suspected Islamic fundamentalists detonated a car-bomb Friday at a bustling market outside Algiers, killing 15 people and wounding 78, relatives of the victims told AFP.

Security services previously put the toll in the town of Boufarik at seven dead and 20 wounded. But the relatives, returning from the town hospital, gave the higher toll.

It was the second such attack in as many days and

the deadliest to hit Algeria in weeks.

Boufarik is a small town 20 kilometres south of Algiers that hosts a popular open-air market every Friday. The bomb went off in the marketplace around 10:00 a.m. (0900 GMT).

The town is guarded against Islamic fundamentalists by self-defence groups that call themselves "patriots," and has been hit by several bomb attacks.

In August of last year, a truck-bomb targeting an

electric plant killed 11 people.

The security services blamed Muslim fundamentalist rebels for Friday's explosion.

On Thursday, a blast from a booby-trapped ambulance killed two people and wounded seven in the town of Thénia, 50 kilometres east of Algiers, hospital officials said.

The rebels carried out a series of attacks on public targets over the summer, killing at least 50 people,

according to an unofficial toll.

An estimated 50,000 people have died in unrest that has swept Algeria since January 1992, when the military-backed government cancelled elections that Islamic fundamentalists were poised to win.

Only last Saturday President Liamine Zeroual declared that the security situation in Algeria had improved significantly.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 15:05Cartoon — Moomin
- 15:30UEFA Football Match
- 17:00News Flash
- 17:02Sciences Cartoon
- 17:15La Vie Devant Moi
- 17:30 Game Show — Les Bons Genies
- 18:00Police des Polices
- 19:00Le Journal
- 19:15 Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
- 19:30News Headlines
- 19:35 Comedy — Baker's Field
- 20:00The Album Show
- 20:45Drama — Miami Vice
- 21:30Prism
- 22:00News in English
- 22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
- 23:15 Feature Film "The Ultimate Revenge"

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:06Fajr
- 05:23Sunrise/Duha
- 11:27Dhuhr
- 14:52Asr
- 17:30Maghreb
- 18:47Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefieh. Tel. 810740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 624591
- Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
- De la Salle Church Tel. 661656
- Terrasantia Church Tel. 622366
- Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology: Moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

Mm/Mus. temp.

Amman19/31

Aqaba24/35

Desert17/35

Jordan Valley23/35

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 34, Aqaba 34 Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Jihad Sammour765018

Dr. Ghaleb Zawadeh736011

Dr. Bilal Al Sayid890280

Dr. Hisham Kan'an790285

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy637065

Naioukh pharmacy623672

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID: Dr. Ahmad Qana281484

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA: Dr. Akram Haddad985550

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Department681111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medica813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6

Akileh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 66612637

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 60224050

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323

Zarqa National Hospital09900560

Ibn Sina Hospital09986732

Al Hikam Modern Hospital09990990

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital02725555

Greek Catholic Hospital02722725

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital021247100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:30 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

07:00Damascus (RJ)

09:20Beirut (RJ)

09:30New Delhi (RJ)

09:30Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

10:00Abu Dhabi, Doha (RJ)

10:00Colombo (RJ)

10:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)

14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:20Cairo (RJ)

18:15London, Berlin (RJ)

18:40Vienna (RJ)

01:50Madrid (RJ)

04:30Bangkok (RJ)

Other Flights

02:00Rome (AZ)

12:40Muscat, Doha (GF)

Ministers of social development focus on women's issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministers of Social Development in Arab countries today will open a two-day meeting in Amman to discuss measures to be taken in the course of implementing resolutions passed by the World Conference on Women held in Beijing last year.

The meeting, which is held under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma, is expected to formulate a unified Arab programme along with its implementation mechanism, according to a statement Friday.

On the meeting's agenda is a draft document which outlines future short and medium-term plans in promoting the status of women, the statement said.

The document, which was prepared by a group working under the auspices of the Arab League and focuses in particular on various regional and international developments of the past four decades and their impact on Arab women, gives special attention to issues of poverty and living standards of the Arab family.

The statement said that the ministers will examine a programme to ensure the implementation of the Beijing conference's resolutions, as well as ideas

for facilitating Arab countries' struggle with poverty and involvement of women in the public arena.

Specialists last week ended a three-day meeting directed toward final touches to the document, while preparing a plan for the promotion of women's status effective up to 2005.

They also reviewed a report on managing Arab family affairs as well as individual national reports from the Arab delegates who discerned their country's readiness to respond to the resolutions of the Beijing Conference.

Al al Bayt University proposes chair for Malaysian studies

By Christina Schlegl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — President of Al al Bayt University Adnan Bakhit proposed the implementation of a chair for Malaysian studies as further implementation of cooperation between the two countries.

The proposal came to light during a recent meeting with Chargé d'Affaires of the Malaysian Embassy Ramli Naam. Mr. Bakhit told the Jordan Times Wednesday.

More than 400 Malaysian students currently attend Al al Bayt University — from a total of 2,100 Malaysian students currently enrolled at the Kingdom's universities.

This collaboration between the two nations started two years ago in an audience with Malaysia's Prime Minister Mohd. Mahdum, in Kuala Lumpur, to discuss the idea of establishing a chair for Malaysian studies which would include the Malaysian language, the history of the region, economics and regional organisation of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries, Dr. Bakhit

explained. Asked about what prompted such a step, he stated that Malaysia is an example of great achievement in the field of economic and democratic development as well as human rights.

"We feel that Malaysia is a promising country, deserving of [such] a chair," Dr. Bakhit said.

Last March Al al Bayt University and the Bahan State Foundation signed a "memorandum of understanding" stipulating educational cooperation between the two parties.

This comes in addition to the current "twinning programme" between Al al Bayt University and its Malaysian counterpart, Pahang University, which foresees a student exchange whereby Jordanians study for two years in Malaysia and continue the education in Jordan for another two years, while the Malaysian scholars follow a four-year programme at Al al Bayt University.

Dr. Bakhit Wednesday received a delegation of businessmen from Johor University. The two sides discussed to what extent they find the proposed programme satisfactory in meeting certain requisites. The University of Jordan, in cooperation with Malaysian students enrolled therein, organised a "week of brotherhood," which, according to the president, is an academic tradition to introduce the new students to the university's facilities and familiarise them with the health insurance system as well as informing them of certain aspects of local historical interest.

This cultural week ended last Thursday.

Mr. Naam Thursday stated that Dr. Bakhit's proposal has been handed over to the Malaysian Government in Kuala Lumpur for a final decision.

The Government will check the feasibility of the project, he said but could not state when the final determination will be made.

During their recent meeting the two men discussed the current situation of Malaysian students, their progress and how to better improve bilateral cooperation.

"Our relations with Malaysia have always been open and fruitful," Dr. Bakhit concluded.

Jordanians condemn Israel's 'criminal actions' in Palestinian areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians Friday condemned Israel's "criminal actions" in occupied Jerusalem and the Palestinian self-rule areas and held the Jewish state fully responsible for the flare-up of violence over the last three days.

The Jerusalem Societies group in Amman described Israel's opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel under Al Aqsa Mosque as a "criminal action against Islam" and called on the international community to step in and end such atrocities.

"The opening of the tunnel is a crime committed against the Muslim people and a move aimed at shaking the holy shrine's foundations; it constitutes flagrant defiance of condemnations which Israel is used to hearing from the Arabs regarding its illegal practices," the statement issued from the 15-member group said.

"We warn the world that

the city of peace is exposed to a Zionist onslaught in the form of excavations and demolitions aimed at destroying peace and erasing the Arab and Islamic character in the holy city," continued the statement.

The group noted that "the opening of the tunnel under the holy shrine manifests Israeli malintent and constitutes part of Israel's drive to demolish the Islamic site and build a Jewish temple in its stead."

"Seldom a day passes by without Israeli attempts at violating the legitimate rights of the Arabs and Muslims in defiance of the Arab and Islamic nations," continued the statement, adding that "the Israelis are pursuing efforts to Judaize Jerusalem, uproot its Arab population and erase the Arab and Islamic presence from the city in total disregard of international law."

The organisation further stated that "the Arab Societies of Jerusalem demand

that the Palestinian National Authority and Arab and Muslim nations support our people in Jerusalem by deed rather than mere statements of anger and condemnation and halt all processes aimed at normalisation [of ties] with Israel and peace which is not founded on justice and full restoration of Arab rights."

The Israeli practices vis-a-vis Al Aqsa Mosque was protested by Jordanian women groups who staged a sit-in at UN offices in Amman Friday.

The protesters expressed their support for the intifada in a memorandum, presented to the UN, in which they demanded intervention to stop Israeli measures.

The women's groups insisted that Arab states reconsider the peace process with Israel, halt negotiations, sever ties, and end all forms of normalisation with the Jewish state.

These groups announced that they will hold a sit-in

Sunday afternoon at the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Amman to demonstrate their disapproval of the Israeli manoeuvres.

Meanwhile, two political parties, the Jordan Democratic Popular Unity Party and the Jordan Arab Al Ansar Party Friday issued statements condemning the Israeli moves and stressing that the renewed intifada in Palestine came as a natural response to Israeli defiance and its disregard for the sentiments of Arab and Muslim population.

"The Israelis are proceeding with steps to Judaize the Arab city of Jerusalem and they are attempting to demolish Al Aqsa Mosque in order to achieve their objectives," the statements read.

The Jordan Democratic Popular Unity Party demanded that the government close its Tel Aviv embassy and urged other Arab nations to stop all

forms of contact aimed at normalisation with the Jewish state.

At the same time the 10 opposition political parties Friday issued a statement describing events in Palestine as a fresh intifada involving the whole Palestinian population and aimed at ending the unjust Oslo accords.

The opposition parties demanded the following: continued support for the Palestinian people's struggle, the Jordanian government's recall of its ambassador to Israel, the dispatch of the Israeli ambassador, and the abrogation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty along with all forms of normalisation with the [Jewish] state.

They also called for Arab governments to end all forms of normalisation with Israel and that the Jordanian government end its "detention and torture of supporters of the Palestinian struggle."

Ministers of Awqaf join forces for Islamic cause

AMMAN (Petra) — The executive council of the Ministers of Awqaf of Arab and Islamic Countries Friday concluded a meeting in Amman and issued a statement pledging joint action to deal with the current challenges facing the Islamic world, while condemning recent Israeli moves at holy sites in Arab Jerusalem.

The council, which groups representatives of nine Islamic countries, said that their nations will pursue efforts to disseminate Islam and said that their respective ministries will mobilise to highlight the Islamic cause.

In the statement, the council urged Moslem nations to find ways to serve the Islamic society at large through humanitarian, health, educational and social programmes.

The council also urged the various participating countries to confront hostile campaigns which aim at distorting the image of Islam as well as coordinating efforts at the international level.

"The council, while condemning Israeli actions at Al Aqsa Mosque and the Israeli excavations under the holy shrine, urges all Arab, Islamic and world organisations to exert substantive efforts to help protect these holy sites," said the statement.

"Ongoing Israeli measures aimed at Judaizing the Arab city and changing its Arab and Islamic character therefore deem incumbent on Arab and Islamic countries and organisations to wage a global campaign to foil such motivations," the statement added.

Furthermore, the council's statement urged Islamic nations to exchange expertise and step up cooperation in the course of protecting Islamic cultural heritage and treasures and to give due attention to zakat (charity).

On the executive council are delegates representing Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Gambia.

Experts debate impact of WTO membership on country's economy

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Experts and officials from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the private sector Thursday thoroughly discussed the benefits, responsibilities and challenges facing Jordan as it proceeds with talks to join the WTO at the Amman Chamber of Industry.

In an address to the meeting, chairman of the Chamber of Industry Khaldoun Abu Hassan pointed out that the Kingdom has certain concerns and priorities which wants to see addressed as it negotiates joining the WTO.

He said in a speech delivered on his behalf by his deputy Othman Bdair that the country needs to ensure that its growing industry is protected from setbacks and is not deprived of appropriate protection. Many industrialists have said that opening the Jordanian market to foreign products and lifting the protection offered to the country's industry as required by the WTO could have damaging repercussions on the

Kingdom's industrial base.

He stressed the importance of maintaining the flow of investment in industry and attracting foreign capital as well as avoiding stresses of unemployment by providing more employment opportunities in the industrial sector.

Increasing production for local consumption and exports to Arab markets as well as attracting joint ventures as means of reducing the burden of payments of imports are also major priorities of the Jordanian industry, Mr. Abu Hassan said in his speech.

He concluded by saying that Jordan is "still struggling hard to cope with economic reform and restructuring, resulting in an increase in prices including electricity, water" and other basic commodities and services.

WTO officials said that when Jordan joins the WTO it will have access to various aspects of economic protection. However, Jordan would have to accept and adjust to legislation and agreements within the WTO without having the ability to influence them, experts said.

The purpose of this adjustment is to ensure that the trade regime of the country is consistent with that of the WTO, the participants at the debate said.

They further explained that when a country joins the WTO it has to make concessions just like all other members who have joined within the past 50 years.

During the meeting, industrialists discussed the implications for the country's industries of bringing down trade barriers and the challenges of competing with international industries.

WTO officials said that the world organisation will allow a gradual lifting of customs fees so as to give the local industries the chance to develop to competitive levels.

Mr. Bdair said that when Jordan joins the WTO the implications and changes will be "great." Therefore, he added, Jordan should change its way of doing business to compete with other countries.

"We have a small market of 4 million people. When we join, we will have a market of hundreds and millions of people. So there are many benefits to

be obtained from the WTO," Mr. Bdair added.

Experts agreed that Jordan will be better off concluding the partnership agreement with the European Union (EU) before entering the WTO because that will give it the opportunity to hold bilateral negotiations with its natural trade partners, and save it the efforts of negotiating with the EU within the WTO.

They said that partnership with the EU will facilitate the accession to the WTO.

Chief of technical cooperation at UNCTAD Said Guehria proposed that the country forms a national task force to assist the national committee in its negotiations with WTO. He said the task force should evaluate the implications of the agreement for the Kingdom's economy and provide the negotiators with the necessary information.

"The problem is the lack of necessary information. This task force should gather information and disseminate it," said Mr. Guehria, who expressed UNCTAD's readiness to help the task force.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- * Works by Mohammad Al Jalous entitled: "Pathetic" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until Oct. 3.
- * Works by Sheren Odeh at the Jordan Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 623297), until Oct. 1.
- * Basketry exhibition (with a variety of wrought iron furniture mixed with basketry) at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 69914172), until Oct. 10.
- * "Summer '96" exhibition at Darat Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh (including ceramic sculptures by Vera Tammar, photographs of Jordanian villages by Ammar Khamash, works by contemporary Arab artists, a mosaic exhibition, and others), until Oct. 8.

King: Talk of change of government is baseless

(Continued from page 1)

who was accompanied on the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah. Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabari, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and other officials.

Following his meeting in

Doha with the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifeh Al Thani, the King told reporters: "I am deeply satisfied with the meeting and pleased with the outcome of the talks with my brothers with whom we have a common objective."

"We have discussed issues of common concern to the Arab countries, the developments in the region and bilateral ties and I believe our views were identical on these matters," he added.

Jordan goes Hollywood

By Christina Schlegl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan goes Hollywood and vice-versa with the shooting of "Sinbad - the Battle of the Dark Knights," the first movie to be entirely filmed in the Kingdom.

This is hoped to expose the country's most popular tourist attractions to a worldwide audience, Vincent Anthony, executive producer of FM Entertainment Production Company told the Jordan Times Thursday.

"Two months ago," Mr. Anthony said, "I visited Jordan with Alan Mehraz, the movie's director and writer, and Frank Stallone, brother of the action movie hero Sylvester Stallone. We met with several business people to discuss the project and found that the location would completely fulfil our needs and meet our requirements. We found Jordan is a great country!"

He said the movie is aimed to correct the negative image of the Middle East in many American's minds.

The story is that of Sinbad, who

rides his country of invaders, saves the day and marries his sweetheart. The film will expose the country's major tourist attractions, like Petra, Jerash, Wadi Rum, and the castles of Ajlun and Kerak, and thus build tourism in Jordan, Mr. Anthony commented.

Besides the exposure of those attractions, the project is also of economic advantage for the country, as many Jordanian business professionals are involved therein.

"Everything we need at the set and above, excluding cameras and relevant equipment, is provided by Jordanian companies," Mr. Anthony stated.

The crew consists of equal numbers of Americans, Britons, Israelis and Jordanians.

All the outdoor shooting is done within the country, mass scenes in the movie include sometimes more than a 1,000 actors at a time.

"The Ministry of Tourism is totally backing the production with the provision of technical assistance and consultation at the sites, and it is furnishing us with the necessary permits to shoot at ancient sites," Mr. Anthony said.

"Everybody has been incredibly helpful so far," he added.

The motion picture will portray the Arab World in a very positive manner, Mr. Anthony stressed, not in form of a fairy tale but as a family-value story.

"This is not a fairy tale, it is a period piece. An adventure movie with a touch of fantasy," he added.

The film, which is scheduled to be released in spring 1997, stars Richard Greco as Sinbad.

Mr. Greco is well-known from the U.S. television series "21 Jump Street", where he replaced teen idol Johnny Depp.

Sinbad's romantic interest will be played by Lisa Russel, the 1990's "Revlon face".

The movie also stars 74-year-old movie star Mickey Rooney as a wizard. Mr. Rooney arrived in Jordan yesterday.

The American production company which is in charge of this average budget movie — that means a budget within the range of \$2 - \$90 million — produced films like "Cyborg," with Jean Claude Van Damme.

NATO takes 'parallel tracks' on Russia, Eastern Europe

BERGEN, Norway (AFP) — NATO will work on "parallel tracks," preparing Eastern European countries for NATO membership while trying to overcome Russian suspicions through concrete cooperation, U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said Friday.

Russia's concerns about NATO plans to expand eastward were at the forefront of an unprecedented meeting here Thursday between Russia's new Defence Minister Igor Rodionov and NATO's 16 defence ministers.

But a potentially dangerous break with Moscow over enlargement appears to have been averted by the NATO defence chiefs, who at the same time set the alliance's course on a future role in Bosnia and dealt with Europe's role in NATO command structures.

Mr. Rodionov made it clear that Russia was interested in continuing cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in Bosnia and other areas regardless of NATO expansion.

"We are working on parallel tracks," said Mr. Perry. "We do not believe we can stop building the security of

Europe with the Eastern and Central European nations while Russia becomes convinced that NATO is a positive and not a negative feature in the future."

"We are hoping these parallel paths will converge sometime in the future. But there is no guarantee of that," he said. "The stakes are very high though, and so everyone involved has the incentive to work very hard at this."

Russian concern not just about NATO enlargement, but NATO itself, its enemy through decades of cold war, was genuine, and it will take concrete military-to-military cooperation in places like Bosnia to prove to them NATO is not a threat, Mr. Perry said.

"They have to see it with their own eyes," he said at a news conference here with Norwegian journalists.

NATO will accept new members at a summit next year, but Mr. Perry confirmed that the three former Soviet republics — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — were "not yet" ready for NATO membership, putting off into future a major bone of contention with the Russians.

U.S. proposals for broad

Russian participation in NATO activities will be laid out during a visit to Moscow by Mr. Perry next month and a reciprocal visit to Washington in December by Rodionov.

Mr. Rodionov said Russia wanted to take part in a possible follow-on mission in Bosnia after the mission of the current Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) ends, and it was ready to begin consultations immediately with NATO.

U.S. officials also said Russia was interested in continuing military-to-military cooperation. The United States are proposing that Russian military liaisons with NATO be made permanent, that Russia be involved in contingency planning through combined joint tasks forces, that a mechanism for managing crisis be created, and that regular meetings be scheduled at the ministerial, ambassadorial and lower levels.

There is currently a Russian three-star general and his staff at NATO military headquarters in Mons, Belgium, but Washington has proposed that there be NATO offices in Moscow and a Russian office in

NATO that would have a voice in alliance deliberations, but not a vote.

Washington also hopes to involve Russia in larger bilateral and Partnership For Peace military exercises.

Meanwhile, NATO took the first significant steps during this meeting to address the problem of keeping the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina after IFOR withdraws.

NATO's military was tasked to draw up detailed contingency plans for four possible scenarios: Withdrawal, an over-the-horizon force to deter war, a scaled-down ground force to sustain the peace, and keeping the current 50,000-strong force in place.

A dispute between France and the United States over who should command NATO's Southern European Command — an American or a European — raised the risk that France would put its integration into NATO military structure on hold.

Failure to resolve the issue will mean NATO would fall short of the goal of restoring France as a full participant in the alliance's military structure by the alliance summit next year.

South Africa to probe Palme murder allegation

PRETORIA (R) — South Africa will conduct a full investigation of charges that an apartheid police spy was behind the assassination 10 years ago of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, a state lawyer said Friday.

Antoinette De Jager, a member of the attorney-general's staff, was responding to court testimony Thursday by Eugene De Kock, former head of a now disbanded police hit squad.

"All claims made by Mr. De Kock will be thoroughly investigated, but I do not want to discuss the details of his allegations," Mr. De Jager said in a telephone interview.

Mr. De Kock said in court he had volunteered information on various apartheid-era crimes to Mr. De Jager, including the involvement of former spy Craig Williamson in Palme's 1986 murder.

Mr. Williamson, one of the white minority government's most effective agents during the 1970s and 1980s, has admitted to carrying out bombings and other actions against anti-apartheid activists.

He is reported to be in Angola and has made no comment on the statements by Mr. De Kock, who made the remarks in court in a plea for a lenient sentence after being convicted of six murders and a series of other crimes.

Prosecutor Anton Ackermann quizzed Mr. De Kock about the Palme murder Friday, asking him if he was repeating hearsay reports.

"I have first-hand information," Mr. De Kock replied. He said he had first learned of Mr. Williamson's role in the killing in 1992 or 1993.

Mr. De Kock denied making the revelation in an attempt to manipulate the press or divert attention from his own criminal activities.

Mr. Ackermann asked him if he had any information about the assassination of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. "No, I was too young at the time," Mr. De Kock replied.

A spokesman for the Swedish embassy in South Africa said Mr. De Kock's testimony had been passed on to Stockholm.

Detectives there said Thursday the testimony could provide a fresh lead in the still unsolved murder.

"A part of the Mr. De Kock information is new. I do not want to say what is new and what is not," Lars Jonsson, deputy of the police investigation, told the national news agency (TT).

Mr. Palme was an enthusiastic supporter of the African National Congress (ANC), a banned liberation movement until 1990, and a staunch opponent of apartheid.

The ANC under Nelson Mandela won South Africa's first all-race election in 1994. Since then members of the former secret police have testified in various court cases of apartheid-era dirty tricks against opponents or critics of the white minority government.

Germany's upper house decides to move to Berlin

BONN, Germany (AP) — The upper house of Germany's parliament decided Friday to join the lower house in its move back to Berlin — Germany's once and future capital — by the year 2000.

In a historic vote in 1991, parliament's lower house, called the Bundestag, decided that it and the lion's share of the federal government will return to Berlin. The impetus was Germany's reunification one year earlier, ending four decades of division that resulted from World War II.

But the Bundestag, the upper house, decided in 1991 it would remain in Bonn. During the past few months, however, sentiments have been growing that Berlin can't be a complete capital without both parliamentary chambers.

Yielding to history's tug, the Bundestag voted Friday to accompany the Bundes-

tag to Berlin. Thirteen German states approved the proposal while only three opposed it.

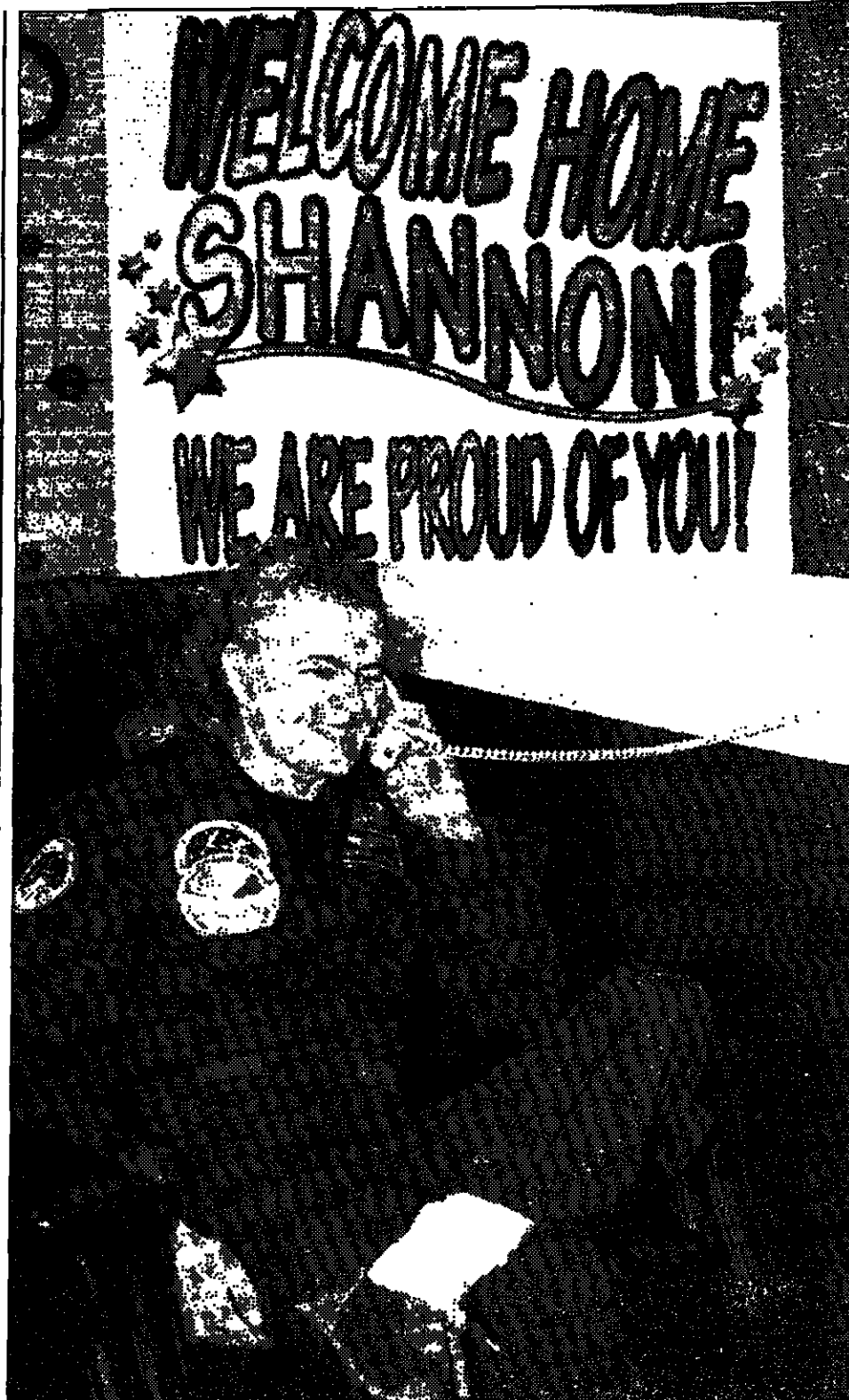
Government ministries are to begin returning to Berlin in 1998.

The Bundestag is moving into the Reichstag, which is a famed symbol of Germany's ill-fated Weimar era democracy and was torched after the Nazis came to power. Restoration of the Reichstag is to be completed by 1999 so the Bundestag can begin holding sessions there.

The Bundestag's designated new home in Berlin also has a history. The building once housed Prussia's upper house of Parliament.

The Bundestag is the voice of Germany's 16 states.

The Bundestag is Germany's main law-making body. But the Bundestag has veto powers over legisla-



Space shuttle Atlantis astronaut Shannon Lucid speaks on the phone with President Bill Clinton following medical tests after returning to earth at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida Thursday. Lucid spent six months aboard the Russian Mir space station (Reuter photo)

Record-setting astronaut returns home

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Astronaut Shannon Lucid returned to Earth on space shuttle Atlantis Thursday, eager to see her family, take a shower, and feel the sun and wind after a record six months in orbit.

Her voyage — the longest spaceflight by a woman and an American — ended right on time with an 8:13 a.m. (12:13 GMT) touchdown at the Kennedy Space Centre, where her trip had begun in March.

"Welcome home, Shannon," mission control said.

NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin brought a gift for Lucid from President Bill Clinton: A huge box of candy-coated chocolates wrapped in gold-coloured foil and embossed with the presidential seal. Lucid had craved the candy while living on the Russian space station Mir. The president also sent a letter of congratulations.

Several hundred people gathered at the runway to welcome Lucid and her five crewmates home. The crowd included her husband and their three children, all in their 20s.

Atlantis glided through wispy clouds and touched down smoothly, giving Lucid her first taste of Earth's gravity in six months. Weak and wobbly, she was met by NASA flight surgeons and transferred on a stretcher into an airport-style people mover. She was taken to the crew quarters building for a battery of medical tests and,

later in the day, a reunion with her family.

"I talked to Shannon just a little while ago and she sounded just the way she did on orbit. Very happy to be doing what she's doing but also very happy to be back down on Earth," said Frank Culbertson, director of NASA's Shuttle-Mir Programme in Houston.

"The docs say that she is in really good health, that there are no surprises, and they expect rehabilitation to go normal," he said.

The 53-year-old biochemist spent 188 days and five hours off the planet. She traveled 120 million kilometres — equal to 157 trips to the moon and back — and circled Earth 3,008 times.

"All adventures have to come to an end," she said Wednesday.

"You have to go home sometime, and I'm ready to go home."

Lucid blasted off on March 22 on Atlantis prepared for a 4 1/2-month mission to Mir, and was supposed to return to Earth in early August. But equipment trouble and two hurricanes delayed the shuttle's launch, leaving her in orbit an extra seven weeks.

Mr. Goldin said this morning that Lucid "never, never flinched once" despite all the setbacks.

"She has a toughness and she has an ability to perform," Mr. Goldin said. "She stuck with it. She stuck with it, and this is what's so good about her."

"She's my hero," he ad-

ded.

Atlantis took off on Sept. 16, and two days later docked with the Russian station. As the six shuttle astronauts floated into Mir, Lucid hugged the men. The first Americans she had seen in half a year.

In the first exchange of U.S. astronauts on the 10-year-old outpost, NASA astronaut John Blaha took Lucid's place. The 54-year-old retired air force colonel is the third American to live on Mir. The first was Dr. Norman Thagard last year.

Blaha is supposed to spend four months on Mir, sharing the station with two Russian cosmonauts who arrived on the orbiting complex last month. Two other cosmonauts occupied Mir during Lucid's first five months.

The shuttle and station flew together for five days, and the nine space travelers moved 2 tons of food, water and other supplies from Atlantis to Mir and 1 ton of scientific samples and equipment to the shuttle.

A fifth Mir-docking mission is planned for January. Atlantis will bring up astronaut Jerry Linenger, who will switch places with Blaha.

The weather rules were tighter than usual for this morning's landing because of the failure of one of Atlantis' three hydraulic units that control the rudder, wing flaps and landing gear. The two remaining units appeared to work well.

European belles to trot down Tirana catwalk

TIRANA (R) — Albania, once ruled by a pro-communist regime, is spurning fashion, gambling TV game shows and music as capitalist excesses, plays host Saturday to the Miss Europe Beauty Contest. Some of the 35 contestants, used to the glittering catwalks of Western cities than a capital emerging from 45 years of grey isolation, may be a little apprehensive of what awaits them. But the mood among Albanians is enthusiastic. Traffic screeches to a halt when the women emerge from their hotel on the main Skanderbeg Square, accompanied by police motor-cyclists who cut a swathe through the crowds. In former times such hospitality was the reserve of the party elite. "It's marvelous. I would never have dreamt of it," said a 63-year-old woman, admiring the contestants. The pageant will be held in the Palace of Congresses built by the late Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha, who reduced Albania to a nation with few roads, primitive communication and poorly-maintained infrastructure. Now, emerging from its isolation, Albania is eager to trade on probably its greatest asset — its countryside and spectacular Adriatic coast.

Zimbabwe finds a hangman

HARARE (AFP) — Zimbabwean journalists are looking suspiciously at their drinking partners these days after the Zimbabwean government announced that it had found a hangman after a long search. "He drinks with you, the press, most of the time, but he does not want us to reveal his name," Justice Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa told local reporters, according to a newspaper Thursday. The new hangman, a Zimbabwean, was put straight to work — executing five murderers in one day earlier this month. The previous executioner, who had done the job since 1982, died in March and the government began a recruitment drive. One major problem was that the ageing hangman had refused to teach anyone else the ropes so "He died with his skills," a prison officer said. How the new recruit learnt the job remains a mystery — as does his identity.

Commission upholds polygamy in S. Africa

PRETORIA (AFP) — A South African legal commission has ruled in favour of polygamy, stating that the practice maintains traditions and is not necessarily demeaning for the several wives of one man. "In a patriarchal world, where there is not economic, social or political equality between men and women, it is the institution of marriage itself, whether monogamous or polygamous, which disadvantages women," the commission declared in a report submitted Wednesday to Deputy Minister of Justice Manto Tshababala. While Christian communities practice monogamy, Muslims and many South African black men traditionally take several wives. It is common for black men in rural areas to live with his wives in a "kraal", consisting of a central hut and separate huts for each of the women. Men who work in the towns also tend to take a second wife there. There are no complete statistics on polygamy in South Africa, but feminist movements constantly speak out against the practice, especially since the constitution provides for sexual equality in all domains of life. The report also declared that the practice of paying bridewealth to a father to take his daughter in marriage, should be maintained.

Scottish nationalists: 'We can pay our way'

INVERNESS, Scotland (R) — Scottish nationalists insisted Thursday an independent Scotland would be more than able to pay its own way and presented their plans for economic development.

A document published by the Scottish National Party (SNP) at its annual conference in Inverness said Scotland would be the 21st richest country in the world if it escaped from union with the rest of Britain.

It outlined an economic strategy designed to boost industry and jobs by cutting taxes — including Britain's "unfair" level of tax on the national drink, whisky.

"Scotland is a wealthy country, richer than New Zealand, Finland and Iceland — small countries which are prosperous and more than pay their way in the world," the SNP said in its publication, the Economic Case for Independence.

The party said its economic priorities would be to reach full employment, invest in education and training, build a modern infrastructure, develop industry and reform taxation.

The SNP is in bullish mood at what will be its final annual conference before the next British general election, which Prime Minister John Major must

call by the end of next May. "We are subsidised by nobody — the revenues from our country are used to prop up the ailing U.K. economy," SNP leader Alex Salmond told reporters.

"We are constrained by policies which are inappropriate for Scotland and directly harm our people and prosperity."

SNP treasury spokesman John Swinney accused the ruling Conservatives and the opposition Labour Party of indulging in "scaresong" against Scotland and its case for independence.



Nicu Ceausescu, hard-drinking playboy son of former Romania's executed Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, shown here during his trial over charges linked to ordering the repression of protests during the December 1989 revolt, died in hospital in Vienna on Sept. 26, succumbing to internal bleeding from acute liver disease (Reuter photo)

Playboy Ceausescu son dies in Vienna

VIENNA (R) — Nicu Ceausescu, hard-drinking playboy son of Romania's executed Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, has died in hospital in Vienna, succumbing to internal bleeding from acute liver disease.

Nicu, 45, flown to Vienna from Bucharest on Sept. 18, died in the early morning "from bleeding of the oesophagus as a result of liver cirrhosis and viral inflammation of the liver," Vienna General Hospital said in a statement.

A womaniser and gambler who squandered vast sums at gaming tables across the world, Nicu was being groomed as his father's successor before a violent revolution toppled the Stalinist dictator in December 1989.

Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, were shot by firing squad on Christmas Day, ending their ruthless 24-year rule.

Doctors in Vienna performed surgery last Friday to staunch bleeding from veins detached from his oesophagus. But the statement said that after bleeding resumed his body went into shock and he died.

Vienna physicians said Nicu had not been in need of a liver transplant as the organ had been functioning adequately.

Romanian doctors had lacked the medical and sur-

gical equipment to treat his condition.

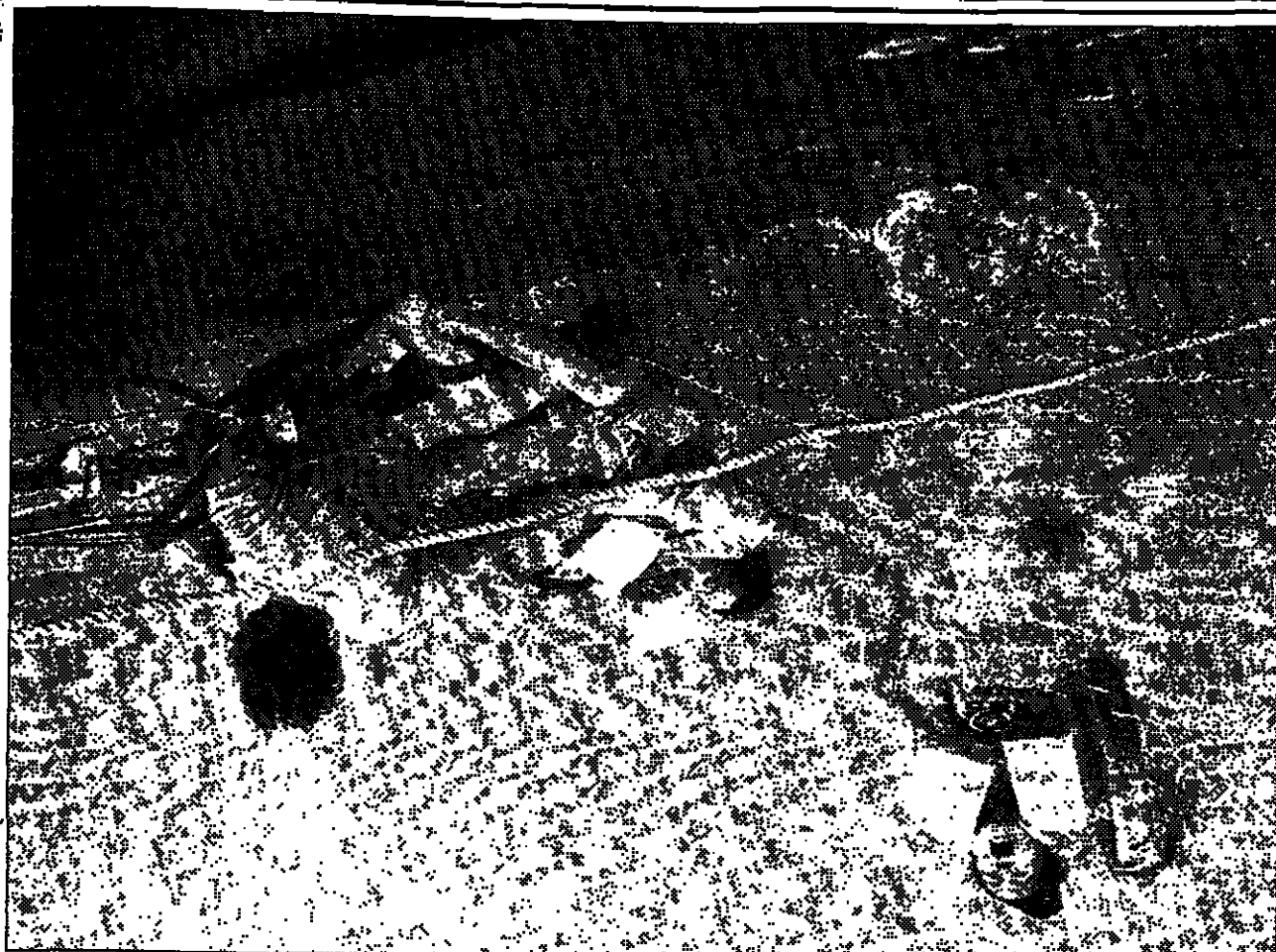
Nicu, youngest of the three Ceausescu children and as heir apparent dubbed "the princeling," indulged his appetite for excess: involving women, drink and wild parties at his smart villa in central Bucharest.

A reluctant member of his circle was Olympic gymnast Nadia Comaneci. His playboy lifestyle — against a background of cruel poverty and shortages of food and other basics for most Romanians — symbolised the corruption of his father's rule.

Despite his past reputation, first reactions in Romania were sympathetic. State media remained silent but private broadcasters across Romania announced his death.

"This is sad news, although it was expected given his grave illness," said Sibiu pensioner Elisabetha Antim. "May God rest his soul, which was unjustly tormented."

Austrian current affairs magazine News said Nicu's friends had been paying for his treatment in Vienna, reporting that up to 400,000 schillings (\$37,000) had been deposited with the Austrian embassy in Bucharest.



Hong Kong activist Fong Yung-Yun is winched back aboard their protest ship as leader David Chan (left) lies drowned after leaping off in protest against Japanese claims to sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands, which Japan calls the Senkakus Thursday. Chan, the leader of the Alliance of Worldwide Chinese Protection for the Diaoyu Islands, was certified dead after he and three other men jumped off the vessel to protest near the disputed islands (Reuters photo)

Japanese parliament dissolved for Oct. 20 election

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto Friday dissolved parliament and set Oct. 20 as the date for general elections expected to bring about political realignment but no major policy changes.

The prospect of elections for the 500-seat lower house, the first since July 1993 polls ended 38 years of unbroken rule by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and ushered in an era of coalition government, has so far failed to excite an apathetic public.

Most analysts expect a record-low turnout for a heated but issue-free contest as weeks of wrangling between Mr. Hashimoto's LDP and two smaller coalition partners over timing of the polls gives way to an LDP search for post-election partners.

One point of focus is whether the LDP, which regained the reins of power in 1994 in a coalition with the Social Democratic Party and New Party Sakigake, can capture a simple majority or will be forced to shop for new coalition partners.

Mr. Hashimoto, who is also LDP president, urged his party to fight to give him a second term unfettered by the need to compromise with coalition partners.

"Although the LDP has been the biggest party over the last three years, we still don't have a simple majority," he said.

Mr. Hashimoto is expected to pin his bid for a second term on an improving economy and his handling of a bitter dispute with the southern prefecture of Okinawa over U.S. military bases.

The opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), headed by former LDP powerbroker Ichiro Ozawa, plans to attack the government over an unpopular sales tax rise due in April.

Shinshinto, made of components of the reformist government that ruled briefly in 1993-94, will also offer a plan for a drastic tax-system overhaul and to cut bureaucratic red tape.

To Shinshinto's chagrin — and widespread public scepticism — the LDP has also adopted administrative reform as its poll platform, making it hard for voters to compare platforms.

Marketwatchers said the elections would be a mere sideshow to more critical economic factors, but did not rule out bursts of hopeful anticipation.

Opposition boycotts parliament as president clamps down in Armenia

YEREVAN (AFP) — Communist opposition deputies boycotted the Armenian parliament Friday as President Levon Ter-Petrosian maintained a tight army clampdown on opposition groups contesting his reelection.

Troops backed by tanks and armoured vehicles on standby in Yerevan reopened roads for municipal vehicles overnight but after dawn they sealed off key arteries and public squares in the city centre.

The head of the Armenian Communist Party, Sergei Badalian, said that the seven Communist deputies in parliament, which mostly backs Mr. Ter-Petrosian, "walked out yesterday and we don't intend to return."

"The parliament is no longer a democratic parliament, because there is no opposition left in it," he said.

Mr. Badalian said he believed Mr. Ter-Petrosian rigged his election win Sunday over nationalist opposition Vazgen Manukian, gaining a second term in office. Mr. Badalian urged the international community not to recognise the result.

"We should have new elections in six months, or a year at the latest," he said, adding: "It is clear that there was falsification. Today's power is not legitimate."

The army was ordered on to the streets and all rallies and marches were banned Thursday after violent protests by Mr. Manukian's supporters late Wednesday, during which demonstrators stormed parliament and beat up the parliament speaker.

Parliament then voted by an overwhelming majority Thursday — 150 of the 157 deputies present, from a total of 190 — to lift the parliamentary immunity of Mr. Manukian and seven other opposition deputies accused of "organisation of a coup d'etat," Mr. Ter-Petrosian's government

vowed to punish the protest organisers.

In a statement to Interfax agency, Interior Minister Vano Siradeguian said that the authorities "have all the means necessary to ensure security and constitutional rights."

"Security forces are in control of the situation across the country and will take action to bring those responsible for Wednesday's violence to justice," he added.

Soon after the vote, Mr. Manukian went into hiding and authorities closed down the headquarters of his nationalist National Democratic Union Party.

Five of his party colleagues who turned up for the parliament vote were attacked by supporters of Mr. Ter-Petrosian.

However, there have been no arrests yet, Interfax quoted a source in the judiciary as saying Friday.

The United States has called for restraint and said it would wait for a full report on the elections from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) before pronouncing on the fraud allegations.

"The United States is concerned about OSCE reports of these irregularities and awaits the OSCE's final assessment," spokesman Glyn Davies said Thursday. According to the Armenian Electoral Commission, Mr. Ter-Petrosian won Sunday's poll with 52.09 per cent of the vote.

But four members of the commission issued a dissenting statement, saying that Mr. Manukian had won 60 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Ter-Petrosian is a one-time hero of the struggle against communism elected overwhelmingly in 1991 as head of state of a newly independent Armenia.

A well-placed political analyst, who asked not to be identified, said the military clampdown was an over-

reaction to the disturbances which could suggest "authoritarian leanings. That could be dangerous, since to resolve economic problems, the president needs the people's confidence."

Russian President Boris Yeltsin congratulated Mr. Ter-Petrosian, a close Moscow ally who has allowed Russian troops to be stationed in the country.

A senior Russian diplomat quoted by Interfax said Thursday that the "violence organised by the opposition must be condemned."

Armenia is the smallest of the 15 former Soviet republics and suffers a crippling energy and economic crisis. Many of Armenia's 2.4 million voters blame Mr. Ter-Petrosian for the country's difficulties since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, which have driven hundreds of thousands to emigrate, mostly to Russia.

OSCE denounces protesters

The OSCE which monitored Armenia's presidential election and declared it essentially fair denounced opposition demonstrators who tried to storm parliament on grounds the voting was rigged.

The behavior of these protesters, a handful of whom made it into the building Wednesday and beat up the parliamentary speaker and deputy speaker, "amount to a grave violation of the democratic process," the OSCE said.

In a statement signed by its Chairman Flavio Cotti, who is also the Swiss foreign minister, the organisation said it "condemns the demonstrators who entered parliament by force."

The OSCE had 89 observers on hand for the voting. It said Tuesday they had detected some irregularities during the election but that these were not serious enough to challenge the Armenian Electoral Commission's tally in favour of the incumbent.

Body of drowned Diaoyu Islands protester returned to Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) — The body of David Chan, who died during an anti-Japanese protest in the East China Sea, was returned here Friday to mourning family and supporters, who have cast him as a martyr to his cause.

Mr. Chan, 45, died after throwing himself into heavy seas near the Diaoyu-Senkaku Island chain during a head-on confrontation with the Japanese Coast Guard, which had demanded that his protest vessel leave the area.

"No one will ever forget David Chan," activist Lew Mon Hung, who had decided to pull out of the ill-starred voyage at the last minute, said at Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport.

"If David had died in Japanese sea, it would have been a waste, but he died in Chinese waters, so the trip was successful," said Mr. Lew, before the body was taken off a flight from Taiwan, where the vessel docked after the tragedy.

The uninhabited islands, supposedly rich in oil deposits, are claimed by China, Taiwan and Japan.

Chan's wife, daughter, brother and sister sat weeping behind a row of the remaining grief-stricken activists, all members of the Alliance of Worldwide Chinese for the Protection of the Diaoyu Islands.

"He is a martyr now," ship's Captain Ngai Lup-Chee earlier said. But asked if he would ever return to the islands, he shook his head.

"I won't go back ... it was too much pressure," he said in Taipei, after journalists and protesters were taken off the vessel in the early hours of Friday.

He later apologised to Chan's family for not having been strong enough to



The family of Hong Kong activist David Chan run to his coffin at Hong Kong airport Friday as they receive the coffin of the leader of the Alliance of Worldwide Chinese Protection of Diaoyu Islands who drowned while protesting against Japanese claims to sovereignty of the Diaoyu Islands. Chan's wife Lau Shun-Hing carries a Chinese flag as she runs with Chan's elder sister Lai-Hung (Reuters photo)

refuse Chan's request to undertake the protest jump, after cancelling a planned landing on the islands to plant a Chinese flag.

One survivor of the jump, Angus Chan, said he hoped the tragedy would help future protest voyages to the islands.

"It will give others experience on how to handle this kind of case," he said, adding the protesters had not realised their action would be dangerous until they were already in the water.

Chan has become a martyr who could inspire growing numbers to speak out against Japan in Hong Kong and other Chinese-speaking territories, analysts said.

"Chan in death will become a self-styled martyr to other Chinese," said Fong

So, managing editor of China-watching magazine The Nineties.

There were angry demonstrations outside the Japanese consulate here, blaming Japanese imperialism for Chan's death. Some stamped on the Japanese military flag.

Around 20,000 people are expected to attend a candlelight vigil in Chan's memory here Sunday.

Hong Kong's Chief Secretary Anson Chan called for a measured response to Chan's death, as anti-Japanese sentiment in the region swelled.

"I hope that views will be expressed in a calm manner without affecting the relationship between ourselves and Japan," she told Hong Kong government radio in

Melbourne during a visit to Australia.

"I'm sure no Hong Kong people would wish to disturb in any way that relationship. But at the same time I entirely understand the depth of feeling over this dispute," she said.

The Foreign Ministry in Beijing blamed Tokyo for its failure to stop Japanese nationalists from building a lighthouse on the islands, as they tried to reassert Tokyo's sovereignty claim. A spokesman said this had aroused the "strong indignation" of Chinese people including compatriots from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

A Hong Kong coroner will carry out an autopsy on Chan's body, the judiciary said.

Lebed meets regional leaders on Chechenya

MOSCOW (R) — Security tsar Alexander Lebed met leaders of southern Russian regions in the capital of the ethnic Republic of Ingushetia Friday in an attempt to rally support for his peace drive in break-away Chechenya.

"We are ripe for peace," Interfax News Agency quoted Gen. Lebed as saying on arrival in the region, which borders Chechenya.

"If anyone opposes it (peace) he cannot remain a regional leader," added the retired general, whom President Boris Yeltsin had ordered to end the 21-month war in Chechenya which has killed tens of thousands of people.

Interfax said the rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, who had been expected to attend the meeting, would not come for health reasons. Mr. Yandarbiyev was reported to have had food poisoning earlier this month.

The agency said Mr. Yandarbiyev's deputy, Said-Khasan Abumuslimov, was heading the separatist delegation at the meeting. It did not make clear if rebel Chief-of-Staff Aslan Maskhadov, whose arrival had been expected, was in the team.

ITAR-TASS news agency said the head of Chechenya's pro-Moscow administration, Doku Zavgayev, had not been not invited.

Interfax said a group of Russian parliamentary deputies were planning to meet Mr. Yandarbiyev in an undisclosed location. It quoted rebel spokesman Movladi Udugov as saying Mr. Yandarbiyev and the deputies would tackle issues surrounding planned talks between the separatist leader and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The talks are expected to take place in Moscow next month.

9 killed in Australian rock fall

PERTH, Australia (R) — Nine people, four adults and four children and one person of undetermined age, were killed Friday when a cliff collapsed on a school group at a beach in Western Australia, police said.

Police said rescue work was continuing under special lighting with heavy duty earthmoving equipment but it was not known if others were buried under the rubble.

The dead were part of a group of 25 to 30 schoolchildren, parents and teachers who had been on a school excursion at a popular surfing beach, a police spokesman said.

"We were told that ... 25 to 30 school children and

their parents and teachers were on an excursion and were walking along the beach area beneath these 10 metre cliffs," a police spokesman in Perth said.

"(The cliffs) collapsed on top of them and they were buried under tonnes of rubble," he said.

The accident occurred at about 3 p.m. (10700 GMT) near the Cowaramup National Park about 200 kilometres southwest of Perth, capital of the state of Western Australia.

The police spokesman said it had been raining when the cliff face collapsed and the area was still unstable.

"We've got to go about our business very, very

carefully," he said.

Police at nearby Margaret River told Reuters the group were believed to have just finished a surfing lesson when the cliff face collapsed on them.

A woman from nearby Gracetown said the children had been watching a surfing competition.

"The cliff face was limestone and it just fell in. There are lots of ambulances around here and people are still working at the site," said the woman, who did not want to be named.

The children in the group, from two local schools, were believed to be aged 11 to 13.

Russians back Yeltsin openness on health

MOSCOW (R) — Most Russians back President Boris Yeltsin's decision to come clean about the state of his health and admit to the need for heart surgery, an opinion poll published Friday showed.

The survey by the respected Public Opinion Agency, quoted by Interfax News Agency, said 60 per cent of respondents praised Mr. Yeltsin's openness while 17 per cent were not in favour of it. Others said they had no definite opinion or they did not care.

Mr. Yeltsin, 65, broke a long-standing Kremlin tradition of concealing leaders' health problems when he announced on television earlier this month that he had agreed to undergo surgery to improve blood supply to his heart.

The bypass operation is tentatively scheduled to take place in 6-10 weeks' time. The president, who disappeared from public view in late June, appealed for public support after announcing his decision to opt for surgery rather than lead a passive life.

The Public Opinion Agency's poll was conducted in mid-September among 1,365 respondents across Russia, Interfax said. Mr. Yeltsin made his announcement on Sept. 5.

The poll showed that Mr. Yeltsin's decision won far less backing in rural areas than in big cities where the president's support is traditionally strong.

It said 78 per cent of respondents in Moscow and St. Petersburg backed Mr. Yeltsin compared with only 49 per cent of people canvassed in rural areas.

Meanwhile, Russian security chief Alexander Lebed, painting a picture of deep instability as president Yeltsin prepared for heart surgery, Thursday warned that Russia was on the brink of chaos and the army could soon mutiny.

"We are at a dangerous limit, a very dan-

gerous limit. It is not a time to fight. We must get out of the abyss," he told a news conference.

Gen. Lebed made a stream of controversial statements only hours after Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin issued a rallying cry aimed at heading off dissension in his cabinet in the prolonged political uncertainty over Mr. Yeltsin's health.

Doctors said Wednesday Mr. Yeltsin was fit enough to have heart surgery but they delayed his planned bypass operation for at least six weeks to improve the chance of success.

Gen. Lebed, widely regarded as jostling for power with Mr. Chernomyrdin in Mr. Yeltsin's absence, said decision-making had practically dried up and some parts of Russia faced disaster.

"The will of the state has gone... Many people have adopted a wait-and-see position," the blunt-spoken, 46-year-old retired paratroop general said.

He cited major security threats including unsafe atomic power plants and possible contamination from nuclear submarines. He repeated his view made in a newspaper interview Wednesday that the underfunded army was close to mutiny.

But he found himself immediately at variance with Defence Minister Igor Rodionov who said the situation in the armed forces was under control.

It was not clear what Gen. Lebed's aim was in making his comments but they again highlighted his tendency to step out of line with others in Russia's leadership.

Mr. Chernomyrdin made clear he would not tolerate any lobbying by his cabinet ministers to protect their own interest groups as they draw up the 1997 budget, which needs parliament's approval.

But he held out an olive branch to Gen. Lebed by saying defence spending should be reviewed.

Sri Lanka fighting escalates; 525 killed in bloody battle

COLOMBO (AFP) — Government forces killed at least 450 Tamil Tiger guerrillas and lost 75 soldiers in the bloodiest battle of the latest offensive in northern Sri Lanka, the defence ministry said Friday.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) used waves of suicide bombers to breach the army defences along the western flank of the small army-held town of Paranthan Thursday, the ministry said.

"Troops very effectively repulsed the main attack but a few suicide bombers managed to infiltrate," a ministry spokesman here said,

adding that they had recovered the bodies of 138 guerrillas.

The spokesman said the guerrillas, with explosives strapped to their bodies, blew up when they were shot by the army. Most of the Tigers used in the front-line were women cadres known as Freedom Birds.

The ministry estimated that 1,000 Tigers were involved in the biggest counter-offensive launched by the guerrillas in recent years.

It said 300 rebels were wounded, while the army suffered 146 soldiers and 10 officers wounded in the pre-dawn assault carried out on

two fronts simultaneously.

The attack was similar to the abortive Tiger assault in July last year on the military base of Welli Oya in the northeast where 218 Tiger bodies were recovered by the security forces. Only two soldiers died in that attack.

Officials said the Tigers had sought to slow the army advance from the west of Paranthan.

The army drive, launched Sunday, appeared an attempt to encircle the LTTE's main political headquarters of Kilinochchi, which is just six kilometres south of the army lines at Paranthan.

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Tunnel politics harm peace fabric

THE EXTREMELY high number of casualties on both Palestinian and Israeli sides resulting from three days of armed clashes between them speaks volumes about how tenuous the Oslo peace accords have become under the leadership of the right-wing government in Israel and how dangerous a reversal of the peace process can be.

The controversial opening of the tunnel, under cover of the night three days ago, linking Via Dolorosa with the wall adjacent to Haram Al Sharif may have been the straw that broke the camel's back but it was by no means the only or the determining factor in pushing the Palestinian angry crowd to the brink of another violent intifada. It is rather the accumulation of Israeli policies of non-compliance with the peace agreements that obviously drove the Palestinians into despair and an armed revolt, something that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had repeatedly warned of if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu persisted in stalling over the implementation of the accords.

It was the refusal by Israel to redeploy its troops out of Hebron, the expansion of Jewish settlements on Arab lands and the attempts to seal the future of East Jerusalem unilaterally ahead of the third stage of negotiations that have created this volatile and violent climate. And as if the fire which is already raging between the two sides is not enough, Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon fuelled the tension when he announced two days ago that Israel intended to build more settlements on the Golan Heights and the West Bank. This reckless and irresponsible defiance of international, Arab and indeed Israeli public opinion could only lead to the new cycle of violence and counter-violence which is capable of taking us back to square one in the peace effort.

But unlike the Palestinian uprising in the late eighties, the Palestinians are now deploying weapons to defend themselves against Israeli armed assaults. Israel has also deployed thousands of its troops around Palestinian cities and towns in a bid to seal off the Palestinians completely from the outside world. A war-like condition has therefore been created threatening not only the future of the peace process but also the very foundations on which it was established.

There remains a hope that a projected meeting between Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, perhaps in the company of President Mubarak to defuse tension and stop the clashes. The success or failure of any such dialogue, however, depends on whether Israel aims to respect and implement its agreements with the Palestinians. If Netanyahu persists in his submission that he and his Likud-led government were elected on a new platform which is different from that of his predecessors and necessitates a review of what was solemnly negotiated and agreed to, then we are afraid that Palestine and the region could return to its violent and unpromising past.

The key to the end of violence and the return to peace-building in the area is in the hands of Netanyahu. If the Israeli prime minister sends a clear and loud signal that he will no longer procrastinate or subvert the peace process by settlement expansions or seal the fate of East Jerusalem unilaterally, then and only then would there be real hope of rebuilding the edifice of peace and tranquillity on which so much promise had been pinned.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the events in the Palestinian lands and Jerusalem, a writer for Al Ra'i said that the natural result of the Israeli atrocities and repression was a renewal of the intifada. Mahmoud Rimawi said that the aggressive nature of the Israeli government, the behaviour of the Israeli troops and the repression exercised day and night against the Palestinian people have led to the explosive situation. Leaders in the Arab World and even in Israel itself have been warning the Israeli government against pursuing its present policies, saying that tension has been building up and a new intifada was in the making as a result of the Israeli government's measures that provoked the Arab and Muslim feelings of anger, said the writer. The events resulted in halting the Palestinian-Israeli talks, created new ground for the renewal of conflict and lashed away all hopes for a lasting peace, he added. By deserting the religious sites, refusing to redeploy its forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and by disregarding the repeated demands by the Palestinians to regain their rights, the Israeli government has paved the ground for the present explosive situation, according to the writer. He said that while giving statements in London and Paris, bragging about Israel's commitment to peace, the Israeli premier has been acting just in the opposite direction on the ground but nothing in Israel's actions or words can continue to deceive the world.

A WRITER for Al Dostour called on the government to reconsider giving permits to merchants to import bananas and other food products of which Jordan has a surplus. Mohammad Daoud said that farmers in the Jordan Valley are currently cultivating 20,000 dunums of land with banana trees and the local markets have sufficient quantities of the commodity, and it is regrettable to see Jordan continuing to import bananas that only a handful of wealthy people can buy. Stressing that the government's duty is to protect the national interests, the writer said that there can be no justification for the government's allowing importers of bananas and other agricultural produce to flood the local markets with these products.

Jordanian Perspective

Jerusalem bloodbath is a reflection of Palestinian frustration over progress of peace process

By Dr. Musa Keilani

REOPENING THE tunnel that runs along the walls of Al Aqsa Mosque for tourists was Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's latest way of showing the Palestinians, the Arabs, the Muslims and the international community that he was determined to have his own way in making peace with the Palestinians and the Arabs at large. But it is unlikely that he foresaw the repercussions of the reopening of the tunnel, meaning simply that the Israeli premier does not seem to know much about the very mind-set of the Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims. As such, serious questions are being cast on the very future of the Middle East peace process as long as Netanyahu remains in power in Israel.

Of course, it is indeed a democratic prerogative of the Israeli electorate to decide who should lead their government. But when the exercising of the prerogative leads to serious threats to the existence of other people and a process that could have created a better Middle East for its people to live in, then it is time someone did raise the question: Where are we headed with all our hopes for a better life for all of us in the region, including the Palestinians and Israelis?

For one thing, it was not the opening of the tunnel that was behind the ongoing bloodbath in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Palestinian territories: it was only a catalyst that opened the floodgates of Palestinian frustration with Netanyahu's policies and actions vis-à-vis the peace process and an increasing certainty that the Palestinians were not going to achieve anything in terms of their aspirations to independence and life in dignity in their own land.

The Israeli occupation authorities' response to Palestinian, Arab and Muslim protests against the policies of the 100-and-plus-day-old Netanyahu government clearly indicates that the Jewish state, under the leadership of the present Likud-led coalition, has no intention whatsoever to respect the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It also unveils the hollowness of Netanyahu's reiterations to the Arabs and the international community that he was committed to honouring all agreements reached with the Palestinians.

The message we are getting from the violent flare-up in Jerusalem and other parts of the Palestinian territories is clear: Prospects of peace in the region based on respect for and recognition of the legitimate rights of Arabs are fading fast.

It was unlikely for the Palestinians and Arabs to see as policking Netanyahu's public promise to his Likud Party

last month that "there will not be a Palestinian state," "there will be no red division of Jerusalem," and the Jewish (settler) community in the West Bank "will continue to grow".

For all practical purposes, and when seen against the policies and actions he had been following, it is clear that he meant every word he said.

Those positions simply state one thing: Netanyahu had no intention whatsoever to keep his promise that he would respect and honour the accords that his predecessors reached with the Palestinians and Arabs. This was further underlined when Netanyahu vowed that he would not reverse his decision to reopen the Jerusalem tunnel regardless of anything and everything.

On the other side of the fence are Israeli rightist assertions that the bloodbath would not have taken place had it not been for the Oslo agreement that led to the presence of armed Palestinian forces in the self-rule territories. While

we do not want to even dignify those assertions, it is imperative to state one thing: The Palestinians were forced by circumstances into signing the Oslo accords and the deployment of Palestinian policemen in the self-rule areas was what the Palestinians and the rest of Arabs hoped to be the first step towards the realisation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. And it was naïveté at best for anyone, whether in Israel or elsewhere, to have expected the Palestinian security forces to stand still and let the Israeli army massacre fellow Palestinians.

The key questions today are: What is the future of the peace process (that is, if anything remains of the process)? Is it possible for the Palestinians and Arabs to pick up negotiations from the ruins of the peace process?

What would it take for Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to come to terms after what happened between Israelis and Palestinians in the past four days?

M. KAHIL



Israel is 'murdering peace process with its criminal actions'

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE SITUATION in the occupied Arab lands in general and in Jerusalem in particular was the focus of the Arabic daily papers over the past week. The Iraqi question, and Jordanian domestic affairs also featured in the press.

Writing under the title "Madmen rule Israel", a writer for Al Ra'i discussed the ongoing bloody events in the Palestinian lands, charging that the Israeli government is deliberately murdering the peace process with its atrocities and criminal actions.

Sultan Al Hattab said that the aggressive acts committed by the Israeli forces are starting a conflagration which is bound to trigger a wider explosion, encompassing the whole Middle East region.

The Israeli people, he said, will pay the price of their present government's actions which aim at perpetuating the conflict in the region and causing further sufferings for its people, said the writer.

He called on the world community to step in and put an end to the mad Israeli actions which, he said, are leading the whole region to the brink of a catastrophe.

Tackling the same theme, Taher Al Adwan, a writer for Al Dostour, described the ongoing events in Palestine as another, more daring intifada, against Israeli occupation and Israel's disregard of the feelings of Arab people.

The uprising shows the fact that Jerusalem remains the crux of the whole Arab-Israeli conflict and displays the Palestinian people's determination to save the Holy City from the hands of the aggressors and make it the capital of the Palestinian state, said the writer.

The opening of the tunnel under Al Aqsa Mosque compound is not a simple matter, it is a clear Israeli attempt to shake the foundations of the holy shrine

to accelerate its collapse, added the writer.

The Israelis, he said, have crossed all the red lines by tampering with the holy places and proved, by deed and word, that they are determined to ruin the peace process.

The writer said that the events in Jerusalem and the Palestinian lands should make the Arab countries adopt a united front and declare that normalisation of ties with Israel will be linked to progress in the peace process.

The aspired peace is a common interest for both the Israelis and the Palestinians, as has been proved by the events of the past half century, and therefore it is in Israel's interest to end the conflict and recognise the Arabs their rights in their homeland, said Ahmad Misleh, a writer for Al Ra'i.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has to realise before it is too late that Palestine is part of the Arab World and the Palestinians are part of the Arab Nation which considers Jerusalem a holy city and one that will remain the bone of contention with any invading force, said the writer.

By closing the file of negotiations with the Palestinians on a final settlement and by closing the whole Palestinian territories to starve the Palestinians, Netanyahu is creating an atmosphere charged with anger which can trigger another intifada at any moment, said the writer.

He added that the events of the past two days in Palestine barely present what the situation will be like if the Israelis continue with their atrocities and illegal measures.

Referring to the ongoing verbal war between Egypt and Israel, Taher Al Adwan, a writer for Al Dostour, said that in its capacity of leader of the Arab Nation, Egypt holds many cards in confronting Israel's aggressive stand.

The least measure that

can be taken by Egypt is to influence the whole Arab Nation into refusing the idea of normalisation with the Jewish state as long as no progress in the peace process has been achieved, said the writer.

Cairo can draw up a common Arab strategy vis-à-vis Israel, whose prime minister is openly obstructing the peace process and working towards its demise, he added.

The Arab countries should stop further negotiations with Israel before Israel commits itself to and abides by the requirements of a comprehensive and lasting peace, said the writer, adding that the Egyptian stand is backed by all the Arab masses and it is now up to the Arab governments to show solidarity with Cairo in its struggle to protect Arab rights.

It seems that President Hosni Mubarak's prediction that an intifada awaits the Israelis in light of their government's actions and provocations has come true, said Ali Safadi, a writer for Al Dostour. President Mubarak has warned in a statement published by a German magazine that Netanyahu's actions, his disregard to the Palestinians and their rights and his ongoing Jewish settlement programmes will ultimately trigger a more ferocious intifada that would cause more tragedies in the region, said the writer.

The president has particularly warned that the Jewish settlements constitute time bombs that could explode any moment and has demanded that the Palestinian people's rights be respected and their holy shrines be safeguarded, said the writer.

But the Israelis, through their actions and non-compliance with the provisions of the Oslo accords, are ruining any chance of peace and are responsible for the new wave of violence sweeping the Palestinian lands.

A writer for Al Dostour

expressed the view that despite its hostile attitude towards Baghdad, the United States is careful not to allow the Iranians to have the upper hand in the Gulf because it is keen on protecting its own interests in the oil fields.

Hamadeh Faraaneh said that President Bill Clinton, who has declared recently that he is not out there with his forces to topple Saddam Hussein's regime but rather to prevent Baghdad from causing any danger to American interests in the Gulf, is following in his predecessor's footsteps by refraining from taking measures that would end the present regime in Baghdad because the alternative might be devastating for Washington's interests in the Gulf.

The writer noted that Iran has its own expansionist ambitions in the region and that has prevented Mr. Clinton from making any move that might give Iran the upper hand in this sensitive region.

A writer for Al Ra'i said that the Ministry of Health and other concerned organisations in Jordan have a duty towards maintaining a strong awareness campaign about AIDS.

Spreading public awareness among Jordanians against this killer disease is a national duty and such a campaign should be a continuous process rather than a seasonal activity on the part of the Ministry of Health, demanded Nazih.

The writer said that despite the fact that Jordan has one of the lowest world records of AIDS cases, there is need for a continued campaign as long as the disease exists and as long as Jordan is open to the world economically, socially and commercially.

He said that special campaigns against AIDS should be directed at the youth at schools and universities as the only effective way to deal with this disease lies in awareness campaigns.

LETTERS

Never again

To the Editor:

WITH PROFOUND shock and sorrow I, along with many other citizens, have been following the sad story of Hani and Hanin Al Masri.

This tragic event has caused depression and sadness in the hearts and minds of all the people I know.

It is indeed impossible to understand how a seemingly normal adult would willfully plan and execute a premeditated crime against innocent children, more so, his own.

The nature of this paternal crime will leave a significant psycho-social impact on the society at large and on parents and children in particular. The wounds that have been inflicted will require time and specific attention to heal.

I suggest that a special fund be established in the name of the deceased children, with proceeds to go for the support of A Family Problem Resolution Centre.

I do recognise that this case is a strange and extremely uncommon event for the Jordanian society. But it deserves for us to stop at and to ensure that it will never happen again.

Omar M. Latouf M.D., Ph.D.,
Amman.

'Blasted' situation

To the Editor:

IT MAY be an intrinsic British hatred of intrusive noise, but I may be lodging a complaint shared by many neighbourhoods in Amman.

We moved into a house early last summer, during the school holidays. We knew a school bordered two sides of the garden, but it was not until the academic year began that we discovered the horrors of living near an academic institution.

Screaming, shouting children are tolerable. In fact, the sound of children playing is often pleasurable. But shrill teachers, recitations and the school band blaring down a loudspeaker is taxing.

This year, the same school's kindergarten has acquired its own loud speaker. Oh joy! The two parts of the school now compete to have their lessons heard.

I have three questions: Is it the neighbourhood or the pupil's parents that should know the school's standard? And, since it appears that the loudspeaker theory prevails across Amman, does the Ministry of Education advocate this practice? Whether it is a ministerial or individual school policy, does anyone know what is hoped to be achieved, other than frustrated residents in the vicinity?

Cathy King,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Lebanese process

By Dr. Musa Keblawi



Young Palestinians stage an anti-Israeli demonstration in Gaza City in protest against Israel's opening of a tunnel near Jerusalem's Islamic shrines and the occupation army's violent response to Palestinian protests (Reuters photo)

King calls for establishing full facts

(Continued from page 1)

recent developments, but we have a duty and we have the right to discuss the situation in Jerusalem where Jordan has the honour to safeguard holy shrines since 1948 and up to the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

"Jordan has a special role by which we never meant to transgress on the rights of the Palestinians but rather to serve as a transitional measure until the Israelis and Palestinians agree on a final settlement concerning Jerusalem."

"Our aim was not to allow the creation of a vacuum that could be exploited by others, leading to adverse results. But it is regrettable to say that till now there has been no appropriate coordination between us and the Palestinian brothers."

"When the time comes for them to take over the responsibilities for Jerusalem in a direct manner they will have the right to these responsibilities which we are handling now and this would take place in an orderly manner and within a well-studied plan."

"The results of these incidents will have adverse impact on us all. As we probe them and the conflicting reports about the situation, we have heard certain parties saying that there had been a Palestinian-Israeli understanding over the tunnel, which dates back to more than 2000 years, and that agreement has been reached between the two sides on reopening the tunnel which is located opposite the mosque."

"We are totally in the dark

about this question and about whether there exists an agreement with the former Israeli government on the tunnel. This situation places us in a very worrying position and I am indeed deeply pained. They should have informed us and informed all parties that have connection with this issue."

"Therefore the situation calls for a full investigation into the developments so that we will be in a position to act. We are keen on coming to an understanding with our brothers in order to know the parties that bear the responsibility for these developments."

"We must discuss anything that has to do with the future. We need to discuss matters seriously to ensure that the holy places would not be harmed in any way and I hope to follow up on this issue and will contact all parties in this matter."

Earlier, King Hussein, in comments upon his return to Amman from a visit to the Gulf, said: "There was need for immediate action to prevent a worsening of the situation as the Arab blood that has been shed is dear to all of us. We in Jordan have a special role to play in the Jerusalem question to protect the Islamic shrines."

The Palestinian representative in Amman, Omar Al Khatib, called for urgent medical aid from Jordan to treat the more than 1,000 Palestinians wounded in clashes with Israeli forces.

Acting Foreign Minister Abdul Hadi Majali said Thursday Israel was obstructing Mideast peace-making by opening the tunnel in Jerusalem.

"What has taken place in Jerusalem cannot be justified," said Mr. Majali, who accused Israel of "obstructing peace efforts and harming the feelings of Muslims."

"We believe that it is improper to tamper with the geographic nature of Arab Jerusalem," Mr. Majali said in comments carried by the Jordan news agency, Petra.

During a visit to Bahrain Wednesday, King Hussein opened fire on an outpost of Israel's paramilitary border police on the outskirts of the city, and two Israeli officers were killed.

The Jordan-based spokesman of the Palestinian Hamas movement said the violence in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories was "a step in the right direction."

The spokesman, Ibrahim Ghosheh, praised Palestinian security forces for firing at Israeli troops.

"What they did yesterday and what they are doing today is the right thing," he said.

He urged Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to release Hamas activists and other Palestinian prisoners "to continue their struggle and their resistance against occupation."



Young Palestinians stage an anti-Israeli demonstration in Gaza City in protest against Israel's opening of a tunnel near Jerusalem's Islamic shrines and the occupation army's violent response to Palestinian protests (Reuters photo)

Israeli army storms Aqsa, kills 4 Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli casualties, but gave no further details.

In the West Bank town of Tulkarem, Palestinians opened fire on an outpost of Israel's paramilitary border police on the outskirts of the city, and two Israeli officers were killed.

The battles signalled that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's control over his angry people, and especially over the 30,000 armed men under his control, was slipping away.

However, at other flash-points, Palestinian police were trying to keep at bay thousands of Palestinian demonstrators who marched towards Israeli army positions and buried stones at soldiers.

In the West Bank town of Bethlehem, Palestinian police formed a human chain to keep the crowd away from Rachel's Tomb, an Israeli-controlled enclave on the outskirts of town.

"Enough bloodshed, please listen to us," one of the officers pleaded with the crowd. Another policeman took a pistol and pointed it at the head of a demonstrator who refused to move back.

After hours of tension, the demonstrators finally went home, and an Israeli officer, speaking in Arabic over a megaphone, told his Palestinian counterparts: "We appreciate what you have done."

The tunnel which had

triggered the violence was closed Friday. Police said the site is always closed on Jewish holidays — Friday is the start of the Sukkot holiday — and that the decision to shut it down was not linked to the unrest.

However, Israeli cabinet secretary Danny Naveh said: "I assess police did this because of the prayers on the Haram Al Sharif and the gathering of many people in the complex."

Mr. Naveh said the Israeli government was not considering closing the tunnel. Israeli newspaper reports said Friday that the Clinton administration had suggested to Israel the site be closed temporarily in an effort to calm the situation.

The confrontation at the Al Aqsa compound erupted during Muslim noon prayers. A prayer leader told thousands of worshippers they must "unite and protect our holy shrine."

After the prayers, hundreds of Palestinians began stoning Israeli police deployed around the compound.

Police ordered Jews to halt praying at Western Wall Plaza that runs below the raised platform of the Muslim holy shrines. The compound is also what Israelis see as the site of a Jewish temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

The Israeli forces said they responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets. Doctors at Mukkased Hospital in East Jerusalem said they also retrieved live bul-

lets from some of the dead and wounded.

In the compound, one bearded Palestinian gathered up pieces of brains and wrapped them in his shirt for burial as others around him shouted "Allahu Akbar," while rubber bullets whizzed past.

At the hospital, hundreds of angry Palestinians shouted for revenge, chanting "Kalashnikov, Kalashnikov," in reference to the assault rifle used by most Palestinian police.

Throughout the morning, the Voice of Palestine Radio station broadcast appeals for calm, trying to reassert control over 30,000 Palestinian policemen.

Israeli troops were on alert throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip and enforced a tight closure of the area, barring all two million Palestinians from entering Israel.

In some areas, tanks were moved into position, but there were no reports that tanks fired at Palestinians.

About 10,000 Israeli police were deployed, including about 4,000 in Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel's 900,000 Arab citizens observed a general strike Friday in a show of support for their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In Nazareth, marchers held up signs reading, "Netanyahu, the enemy of peace."

Outside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, dozens

of supporters and critics of the prime minister staged separate rallies Friday.

"Netanyahu in charge: No peace and no security," read one placard, referring to Mr. Netanyahu's campaign slogan — peace and security — which helped him narrowly defeat Shimon Peres, architect of the peace accords, in May elections.

In Cairo, the Arab League, after a two-hour meeting, warned the clashes could lead to "a whirlpool of violence, instability and bloodshed."

But the 22-member league took no action other than to demand that Israel stick to agreements signed with the Palestinians and start negotiations to determine the final status of Jerusalem.

The league also praised the Palestinians who have died in the clashes in what it described as a new "intifada," a reference to the 1987-93 Palestinian uprising.

The league could take little concrete action since the meeting was limited to its permanent representatives.

But the Palestinians had urged that Arab states halt normalisation with Israel. Arab leaders have repeatedly threatened to do so, but until now had resisted a step that would effectively spell the end of the peace process. However, signs were emerging that Israel's ties with the Arab World are increasingly precarious.

Arafat says Israel broke agreement to curb violence

(Continued from page 1)

not yet been arranged.

But Mr. Netanyahu maintained that Mr. Arafat was to blame for the violence.

Flanked by stern-faced security chiefs at a news conference, Mr. Netanyahu insisted that he did not regret his decision to open the tunnel near Jerusalem's Islamic holy sites that sparked the unprecedented clashes.

"I won't justify and don't regret the opening of the tunnel ... It expresses our sovereignty, our history," Mr. Netanyahu asserted.

He said his message to Mr. Arafat was: "Our hand is stretched to you in peace, but we will not agree that during negotiations there will be a war option too. We demand Palestinian National Authority ... stop the violence, stop the incitement ... calm spirits and return to the negotiations. We are ready to continue this process."

The explosion of violence came after months of mounting Palestinian frustration with Mr. Netanyahu's tough policies — delaying the planned troop pullout from Hebron and stalling talks on other issues.

But Mr. Netanyahu expressed outrage that "the first time there seemed to be a crisis" in peace talks the Palestinian police turned their weapons on their supposed Israeli allies.

"The government of Israel gave arms to the Palestinian security forces to protect themselves (and) keep the order in the areas they control," Mr. Netanyahu said. "In recent days, there has been a very serious violation." "We can discuss the issues at hand but this requires abandoning this system of violence," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. Netanyahu said he would consider an invitation from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to meet Mr. Arafat in Cairo.

"There was an invitation from President Mubarak. I did not rule it out. I am prepared to consider it. I don't think the meeting will be the stumbling block. It won't be a problem."

"There will be a meeting. I think the more important thing is to agree on those principles which will guide us, the principles of behaviour, not the arrangements for negotiations or their results," Mr. Netanyahu told the news conference.

Israel under fire at U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

ity Council resolution criticising Israel.

There must be a clear message from the United Nations and actions to calm the situation. "Otherwise, we are very much afraid," Mr. Primakov said.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said his country would not accept the blame for the latest Israeli-Palestinian crisis and called on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to impose order.

"Israel will not allow itself to be placed on trial," Mr. Levy told a meeting of the Security Council meeting.

A senior Palestinian official told the U.N. Security Council on Friday that the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu unleashed "radical extremist forces" that undermined the Middle East peace process.

"Because of this political programme, which was fraught with acts of provocation, thick clouds started to gather in the region," Palestinian foreign affairs spokesman Farouk Kaddoumi said. "As soon as Israel announced the opening of the tunnel in

Jerusalem, then the spark for conflagration was touched off."

But Mr. Levy warned the international community against imposing "unacceptable positions on the government of Israel."

Joined by foreign ministers from Egypt, France, Germany and Britain, the council met to take up the violence in the West Bank and Gaza despite strong lobbying by the United States to keep the issue off the agenda.

Arab countries insisted upon the meeting after the outbreak of violence that followed the opening of a tunnel near the Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque compound, one of Islam's holiest shrines.

Western speakers were expected to join the United States in calling for a meeting as soon as possible between Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Thursday the United States would participate in the debate but "frankly, the United States does not believe that endless rhetoric and endless debate thousands of miles away from this conflict are really going to do the trick."

The United States has opposed previous attempts by Arab states to bring the Arab-Israeli dispute before the council because its membership includes countries less supportive of Israel.

During his speech, Mr. Kaddoumi called on the council to send a fact-finding mission to the Middle East and demand that Israel live up to peace agreements.

Mr. Kaddoumi said the opening of the tunnel was the final step in a series of Israeli actions that built up frustrations among the Palestinians since Mr. Netanyahu's election victory over Shimon Peres.

He cited Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank town of Hebron and the settlement policy of the Netanyahu government.

Mr. Kaddoumi said Mr. Netanyahu's election "led more and more radical and extremist forces to occupy more and more Knesset seats." He said the assassination of Mr. Peres' predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, "demonstrated the depth of fundamentalism and terrorism inside Israeli society itself."

World leaders appeal for end to Israeli-Palestinian violence

(Continued from page 12)

regretted fresh and serious incidents in Jerusalem.

"These incidents must not lead to new clashes," said a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry.

The French government called all parties to the conflict "to use the utmost restraint and refrain from disproportionate reactions, notably using firearms," the statement said.

It also appealed to Israeli authorities not to hinder ambulances and rescue vehicles and grant them free access to hospitals. Paris is in close contact with all parties to the conflict so as to be able to contribute to an appeasement of the crisis, the statement added.

France on Friday decided to ship medical equipment including 2.5 tonnes of medicine to the autonomous Palestinian territories, which will be

distributed by the French consulate-general in Jerusalem.

Paris also asked the EU envoy to make sure that the aid shipment reaches Palestinians.

China said Israel's "arrogant mentality" has led to the present troubles with the Palestinians.

A signed commentary from China's official Xinhua news agency said: "The root cause lies in an accumulation of disappointment, frustration and indignation of the Palestinians over the Israeli government's hardline policy."

"Two days of bloody conflicts between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters left 69 Palestinians dead and over 1,000 wounded," Xinhua said.

"Israel's occupation and arrogant mentality have worsened with the formation of the right-wing Likud government, the commentary continued."

Japan Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda urged Israelis and Palestinians to work to promote mutual trust and help achieve permanent peace in the Middle East, the Kyodo News said.

Mr. Ikeda made the request in a message to Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Mr. Arafat.

"It is regrettable that such an incident has erupted and caused many casualties. I expect the two parties concerned not to escalate tensions any more," he told reporters.

Vietnam expressed its "extreme concern" over the violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

"We are extremely concerned at the increasingly unsettled relations between Israel and Palestine in the occupied territories, a foreign affairs ministry spokesman said, adding that violence was incompatible with peace in the Middle East."

Taleban seize Kabul

(Continued from page 1)

announced from the loudspeakers of mosques.

The Taleban, Sunni Muslims who preach a strict Islamic code including amputation of robbers' limbs, has won widespread support from Afghans fed up with four years of factional war and suffering.

Taleban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar on Friday appointed a six-member interim government in a special decree issued from his headquarters in the southwestern city of Kandahar.

He said the former government had "collapsed" and the new six-member council would look after government affairs during the interim period.

He stressed that Afghanistan would now have a "complete Islamic system." Mullah Muhammad Rabbani has been named as acting chief of the council which includes several key Taleban leaders, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said.

Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai conceded that his government had been defeated by the Taleban, who emerged two years from the Koranic schools of Kandahar.

"The Taleban are controlling Kabul right now. Most of the areas are in the hands

of the Taleban," Mr. Ghafoorzai told AFP at the United Nations in New York.

"The government has temporarily decided to relocate the capital to the north" of Kabul, he said, describing the move as a "strategic retreat" to "avoid a catastrophe and a bloodbath."

He indirectly accused Pakistan of complicity in the Taleban offensive, adding: "We consider the present status of Kabul to be an occupation."

The government's main military commander, Ahmed Shah Masood, had gone to his stronghold north of Kabul at Jabul Al Saraj, said Mr. Ghafoorzai.

Kabul was calm with people moving normally on the street but in decreased numbers. Traffic was normal, but less taxis were evident.

There were no reports of looting or anti-social behaviour by the Taleban, who emerged 22 months ago to mount their battle to establish an Islamic regime in the country.

They maintained a remarkably low profile — very few were seen in the streets although convoys of religious militia jeeps with small white flags were seen passing through the city.

The Taleban were also said to have freed prisoners held in the various jails of the government departments.

(Continued from page 12)

which are next to the confrontation."

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez accused Mr. Netanyahu on Friday of "striking a blow" to the peace process and plunging the region into the "unknown."

"The change of the political, social and religious character of Jerusalem means the total negation of any negotiations on its future," Mr. Bouez told reporters before leaving for a U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York.

Condemning Israel's moves, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Ben Jabr AlThani cancelled a meeting with his Israeli counterpart David Levy at the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Egypt's leading daily newspaper Al-Ahram indirectly blamed the United States for the outbreak of violence, saying Washington had failed to force Israel to honour commitments made to the Palestinians.

In Iran, President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani told a crowd at weekly prayers at Tehran University that Israel's "expansionism" was the root of the troubles in the Israeli-occupied territories.

He also called Mr.

Netanyahu a "war-monger."

Mr. Rafsanjani criticised Arab leaders for seeking peace with Israel, which Iran considers illegitimate and wants destroyed.

"The Zionist acts, which shed blood in Palestine, is a shared responsibility with America," said the statement read out on state television Friday.

The reconsideration of all wrong stands, especially those toward Iraq and its strength, is the only way to rebuild the right ground for a United stand," the Iraqi statement said.

In Baghdad's mosques, prayer leaders on Friday condemned the killings of the Palestinians.

"O Allahu, destroy the Americans," the imam of the grand mosque of Baghdad, Sheikh Abdul Ghafour Al Qaisi, said during Friday prayers which were broadcast live on state television.

More than 3,000 worshippers, both men and women, chanted "Allah Akbar" (God is great) from inside and outside the mosque.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat won praise from some of his most outspoken critics on Friday after the clashes between his police force and the Israeli army.

"Arafat has proved to be the man for the big decisions at the most difficult moment, by calling on

police to fire at the Israelis," said Munir Maqdash, a leader in 'Ain Hilweh of a dissident wing of the Fateh faction.

Sheikh Yassine Khatib, another critic, said: "Arafat has proved that we can count on him and I support his decision to resume the armed struggle. This is the only way to establish our Palestinian state."

But Colonel Maqdash warned the leader of the Palestinian National Authority against resuming negotiations with Israel or "abandoning the armed struggle."

Syria hailed the new Palestinian "uprising." "We are happy... The intifada (uprising) has come to stand in the face of Israeli massacres," the government-run daily Al Baath said in a front page editorial.

Algeria's minister of religious affairs, Ahmad Marani, said during a visit to Cairo that "the Jews are known not to keep their word nor respect conventions, so it's not strange that they are not implementing agreements reached with the Palestinians."

In Libya, the unity ministry called on Arabs to support "the uprising of the Palestinian people for the establishment of its rights in Palestine and the legitimacy of its confrontation against the Israeli occupation."

Violence in Palestinian territories may depress AFM this week

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian stocks held largely steady last week with a sharp drop in trading last week but the flare-up in violence in the Palestinian territories could depress the market this week, brokers said Friday.

The performance of the market last week came despite investor worries that a package of economic legislation could be delayed as a result of disputes between the government and Parliament, they said.

"On the one hand, investors are definitely encouraged by the conviction that the government is determined to push through legislation and amend existing laws," said one broker.

"On the other there are worries that opposition deputies in Parliament could stall the endorsement of the legislation because of political differences with the government," added the dealer, who, like other stockbrokers

in Jordan, cannot be identified by name under standing guidelines.

Among the expected legislations are laws that regulate the capital market and offer higher incentives to local and foreign capital as well as protection for investments.

Expectations of these laws and the government's move to abolish a proposal for a capital tax were behind the recovery that the market saw in the last five weeks, the brokers noted.

According to brokers and market observers, the bourse held steady last week and prices remained at previous week's level despite the anxiety of speculators since "the positive signs in the economy are continuing."

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), as the bourse is officially known, said turnover for the business week ending Thursday was 6.6 million dinars, down from the previous week's 9.6 million dinars.

The report said 6.1 million

shares changed hands under 4,395 deals concluded during the week, with daily average trading dropping to 1.3 million dinars from the previous week's 1.9 million dinars.

The official AFM share price index based on 60 major companies closed at 149.59 points, up 0.1 point or 0.07 per cent, the report showed.

Sectoral indices showed commercial and financial institutions gaining 1.2 per cent and service sector 0.31 per cent. Industrials slipped by 1.38 per cent and insurance stocks by 0.29 per cent.

Industrials accounted for 3.83 million dinars of the weekly volume, followed by commercial banks and financial institutions with 1.48 million dinars, services sector firms with 1.26 million dinars and insurance companies with 22,000 dinars.

Stocks of 89 firms were involved in the week's business, with 33 companies closing with gains, 44 slip-

ping and 12 remaining unchanged.

Brokers said government measures aimed at accelerating privatisation of state entities and the commercialisation ahead of eventual privatisation of monopolies had been behind the recovery of the market in the past three weeks despite the flare-up in Iraq.

But, the brokers, speaking on condition of anonymity, warned that the bout of violence in Jerusalem between Palestinians and Israelis was bound to have a negative impact on the market next week.

"The Jordanian business community is very sensitive to developments in the Palestinian scene, and one could expect a contraction in the market next week," commented a broker.

"It remains to be seen whether the positive signs in the market are strong enough to withstand the impact and check a major plunge in the market."

U.S. provides additional grant to Jordan's water sector

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The governments of Jordan and the U.S. have signed an agreement under which Washington will provide a grant of \$7.2 million to support the Kingdom's water sector, raising the total American aid to date to the sector to \$41 million.

The grant will be used to construct wastewater treatment facilities in Jordan and complement the Kingdom's stepped-up efforts to refurbish and modernise its water network.

Other contributors to Jordan's water sector include the European Union (EU), individual members of the EU on a bilateral basis and the Japanese government.

The latest U.S.-Jordanian accord was signed by Information Minister Marwan Muasher in his capacity as acting planning minister, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan and Lewis W. Lucke, director of the

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), an arm of the U.S. government.

According to a press release issued by the United Nations Information Service (UNIS), the new agreement, called the Strategic Objective Agreement (SOAG), "replaces the ongoing water quality and conservation project launched in 1993."

"The overall objective of U.S. assistance in the water sector is to improve the quality of water in general, to enhance the efficient use and conservation of the scarce water resources available, to promote the efficient recycling of waste water to be reused in the agricultural and industrial sector, to reduce industrial pollution of water in the Zarga River basin and to increase public awareness regarding the problems of water scarcity and conservation," it said.

The accord signed on Thursday is among the latest

aid agreements between the U.S. and Jordan for the American fiscal year 1995 (Oct. 1, 1995 to Sept. 30, 1996). Officials said discussions were under way on further American aid to Jordan but definite figures would be subject to approval by the U.S. Congress.

Given the difficulties involved in securing direct American aid approved by Congress, Jordan and the U.S. are focusing more on using Washington's influence with its allies as well as in the various international monetary institutions to help the Kingdom, officials say.

"In fact, such influence is more rewarding to Jordan at this point in time," said an official, recalling the role played by the U.S. in various multilateral institutions and donors while dealing with assistance to the Kingdom's economic reform programme.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is the day today to get into activities which you have long procrastinated and make the effort to get them completed. Learn to be more industrious in the days ahead so that you can be quite successful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Some investigation today into what can help you make progress is wise at this time. Try to make new allies later this evening so that you can have new resources to flak back on when the need arises, which could be soon.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study into reports today so that they are handled accurately and in a efficient manner. Do something practical later this evening which will please your mate and make this time enjoyable for both of you in the days ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take time today to converse with outside fellow associates who have some ideas for you to prosper on a new method of operation. Handle some public affair later this evening which you have been avoiding and which need to be completed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is an ideal day today to analyse how well you have been keeping promises to others. Do something for fellow associates which will help them to complete an important new project without too much anxiety or stress.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day today to improve on hobbies which please you and thereby relieve the stress you might be under. Know what it is that your mate wants of you later this evening and provide it to him or her for peace of mind.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You have domestic chores to handle today so do them precisely and in such a fashion that you will please your loved ones. Treat friends nicely and be happy with them later tonight in recreational activities which everyone enjoys.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get shopping and other errands handled early today, so that you will have more time to relax with your loved ones. Later in the days ahead take little trips to see your close friends and have some fun times together.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a fine day today for studying your property and devising a method of operation to increase its beauty and financial value. Look into ways on how to make more money in the days ahead for you and your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Gaining personal aims is easy today with the assistance of a knowledgeable person who has the right answers to your career questions. Be with persons you like later this evening and put more humour into your life.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get into personal tasks today, and complete whatever is most pressing to your career activities. You may require labour from you later this evening, so don't be reluctant and you will be handsomely rewarded.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is a good day today to see your close friends and so whatever will make them happy and more devoted to you. Later this evening will be quite prosperous to your loved ones since you have enlisted the assistance of bigwig.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis

Violence stirs fears in Israel business sector

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's business community fears widening violence between Israel and Palestinian self-rule areas will scare off foreign investment that had been boosted by the peace process, analysts have said.

"There were images of shootings, many have been killed. If I were a foreign investor I would fear things have gone back to the bad days before the peace process or even worse than that," said Sever Plocker, economic editor and political commentator for the daily Yedioth Ahronot.

Plans for economic cooperation between Israel and its Arab neighbours would also be hurt, he said.

"Four days ago I would have still said, there was a chance for economic cooperation. Today I have difficulty believing this," he added.

While foreign currency trading was not affected by the clashes, stocks fell sharply with the benchmark Mishkanim index of top 100 shares losing 4.04 per cent to 188.62.

But traders noted that foreign investors were not selling and said some were even using this as a buying opportunity.

Mr. Plocker said he had doubts whether a Middle East economic conference due to take place in Cairo in November would take place in light of recent events.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak recently threatened to cancel the Cairo conference because of the slow pace in implementing the peace accord with the Palestinians.

"No doubt a new situation has arisen. We cannot ignore the grave influence on the economic sphere as well. The business sector is very worried," Danny Gillerman, president of the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce, told a Tel Aviv meeting of businessmen meant to discuss trade issues with the Palestinians.

Only one Palestinian of an expected delegation of four attended the meeting because of the violence.

Riyad Shihabi, represen-

tative of the Palestinian National Authority in the Israeli port of Ashdod, said economic relations with Israel have been difficult.

But he added: "I believe if there will be economic cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians this can overcome political problems."

The signing of a peace accord with the Palestinians in 1993 triggered initiatives of economic cooperation between Israel and its neighbouring countries and helped draw investment.

According to data from Bank Hapoalim, real foreign investments in Israel totalled \$2.03 billion in 1995 compared with \$604 million in 1994. During the first three months of 1996, real foreign investments totalled \$354 million.

Oded Eran, foreign ministry deputy director general for economic affairs, said despite the slower pace of the political process cooperation between Israeli businessmen and counterparts in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia was

going ahead.

"Economic cooperation is obviously influenced by events and the political process. But things are still moving forward," he said.

"Just this week we held talks with Jordan on trade issues. Negotiations with Egypt on the purchase of natural gas are going on and the Cairo Middle East economic conference apparently will still take place...There is no severing of ties," he added.

The peace process has also led to Israeli companies investing in its Arab neighbours.

Midor, an Egyptian-Israeli consortium, plans to build a \$1.2 billion oil refinery in Alexandria, Egypt.

Jordan's Arab Potash Co. has begun shipping potash with Israel's Dead Sea Works and signed a memorandum of understanding with Dead Sea Bromine to set up a \$50 million bromine plant on Jordan's side of the Dead Sea.

Israel's Caniel Can Co. said it was opening a factory in Jordan with an unnamed Jordanian partner.

Syria permits hard currency bank accounts

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrians can now open hard currency bank accounts without having to disclose the source of their funds, banking sources and government officials said.

A new government decree effective from Wednesday allows hard

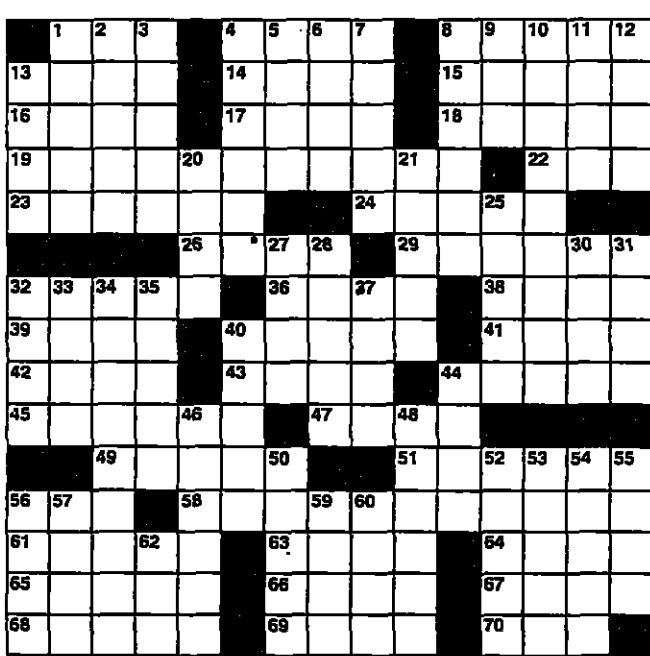
currency accounts which pay five per cent interest if funds are deposited for more than three months.

Officials said the decree would pave the way for the return to Syria of millions

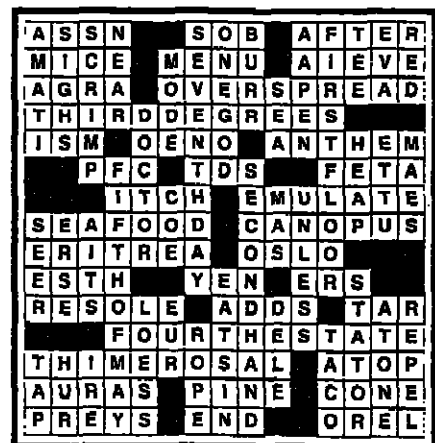
(Continued on page 9)

THE Daily Crossword by Florence C. Adler

- ACROSS**
- Pub
 - Rum cake
 - Fur trader of old
 - FDR's dog
 - Beasts of burden
 - Military action
 - Take it — comes
 - Lease
 - Have mercy on
 - Regale
 - up (disgusted)
 - Heckle
 - Monte —
 - Greatest in number
 - Looks fixedly
 - Burrowing rodents
 - Days of old
 - French city
 - Sikorsky of aviation
 - Worshippers
 - Mop
 - New York canal
 - Italian river
 - Diving birds
 - One of Santa's reindeers
 - Scarlett's home
 - Ballroom dance
 - Ashes
 - Damage
 - Short intermission from work
 - a customer
 - Shadow
 - Inter —
 - Step
 - Raison d'—
 - Waistcoat
 - Dressing
 - Want
 - Crude mineral



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- DOWN**
- Musical count
 - Dress style
 - Appraised movement
 - Pacific island
 - Chopped
 - Flex
 - Dido
 - Declare
 - Small taste
 - Couple's drink?
 - Monster
 - Type of instrument
 - Act the toady
 - Charity
 - Mean
 - Lariat
 - Shadowbox
 - Contaminate
 - Verve
 - Weeps
 - Variagated
 - Taj Mahal site
 - Orange-flavored liqueur
 - Asian palm
 - Portico
 - Slow musical movement
 - Ella
 - Again!
 - Staggered
 - Frequently
 - Hired killer
 - Certain fisherman
 - Erect
 - Card game for three
 - Bryophyte
 - Rectangular column
 - Kismet
 - Land of leprechauns
 - Muscle spasm

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



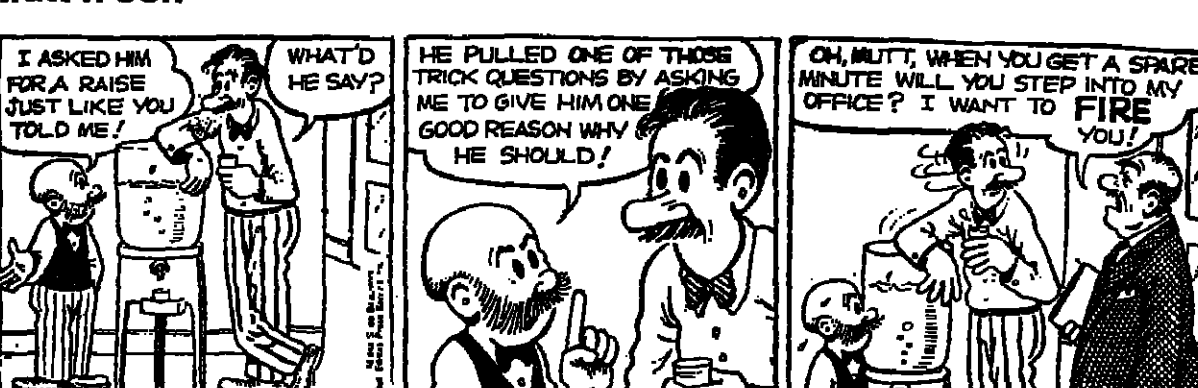
Peanuts



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Mutt'n' Jeff



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Makoto Kobayashi, director-general of the Nagano Olympic Organising Committee, speaks during a news conference at his office in Nagano. The International Ski Federation (FIS) has been pushing to have the start of the men's downhill course raised to an altitude of 1,800-metre from its current 1,680-metre, but Kobayashi refused again with environmental reason, saying that would put it into a national park (Reuters photo)

Nagano '98 organisers ponder security measures

NAGANO (AFP) — Organisers of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics have promised to enforce "soft" security measures despite the harsh lessons of the bombing at the Atlanta Summer Games in July.

"It is hard to imagine that such a thing would happen in Japan," Makoto Kobayashi, director general of the Nagano Olympic Organising Committee (NAOC), said Thursday.

"But we have requested the police to work out counter-measures, taking into account the bombing incident in Atlanta," he added.

The pipe-bomb blast at the Centennial Olympic Park on July 27 left two dead and 112 injured and led to stringent security checks for journalists and spectators. The measures resulted in angry scuffles and widespread embarrassment.

No one has been charged with the attack, although a security guard at the park was initially treated as a suspect.

"As Japanese people do not like such

things," Kobayashi said, "we would like to enforce soft security measures, not too conspicuous, befitting a sports festival."

However, a nerve-gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the Aum Domsday Cult last year has debunked Japan's image as a terrorism-free country. Fire-bomb attacks by leftist radicals have long been a headache for Japanese police.

The NAOC sent 50 people to observe the centennial Olympics where straying and unpunctual buses, many driven by out-of-towners and non-professionals, were among the biggest operational glitches.

NAOC will employ trained professionals to run 1,300 shuttle buses for 3,000 competitors and officials from about 60 countries, Kobayashi said. A media pack of about 7,000 is expected to cover the event.

He added that the NAOC also planned to hire 1,300 cars to be driven mainly by trained volunteers.

Leeds casualty rate soars

LONDON (AFP) — New Leeds manager George Graham has extended his search for replacements to continental Europe as the casualty rate at the English Premiership club soars.

If Andy Gray's calf injury rules the young winger out at Leicester on Saturday Leeds will be without eight members of their first team squad.

Ian Rush and Mark Hateley have still not recovered from hamstring and ankle injuries, respectively, while long term absentees include Brian Deane, Tony Yeboah, Tony Dorigo, John Pemberton and Lee Bowyer.

After their League Cup win at Darlington, Leeds are chasing their first Premier League victory under Graham.

Sunderland hand a Premiership debut to Lee Howey for Saturday's match against Arsenal at Highbury.

Howey takes over in central defence for Richard Ord, who is serving a one-match ban after being sent off at derby.

Last season's leading goal scorer Craig Russell will continue to deputise for injured record signing Niall Quinn and Michael Gray, rested for the mid-week League Cup win over Watford, replaces Martin Smith in midfield.

European Cup Winners' Cup Red Star draw Barcelona big-spenders

GENEVA (AFP) — Red Star Belgrade, who needed extra-time to overcome German second division side Kaiserslautern on their return to international competition after a four-year absence, have drawn Spanish giants Barcelona in the European Cup Winners' Cup.

Bobby Robson's multi-million dollar Barcelona side scraped through against Cypriot opponents AEK Larnaca in the first round and need to improve against the 1993 European champions from Yugoslavia.

English League leaders Liverpool, inspired by Czech Republic forward Patrik Berger, were drawn against Swiss side Sion, who overran Niva Vinnitsa of Ukraine 6-0 on aggregate in the first round.

Former French international midfielder Philippe Vercauteren, a former teammate of Eric Cantona at Olympique Marseille and Nimes, is Sion's biggest star.

Holders Paris St. Germain, yet to concede a goal in any competition this season, may have that record tested by Hakan Suker when they play Galatasaray of Turkey.

French third division side Nimes, who overcame Kispes Honved, 13-times Hungarian champions, in the first round, were pitted against AIK Stockholm.

Italian Cup Winners Fiorentina and Sparta Prague, who both edged through the first round, clash in what could be another close tie.

Newcastle United's liking for high-risk ventures should be put to the test against Ferencvaros, in the UEFA Cup.

The Hungarians came through 5-3 on aggregate against Olympiakos of Greece while Kevin Keegan's side had a four-goal win in England to thank after losing the return leg 2-1 to Swedish part-timers Halmstad.

Valencia, who knocked out holders Bayern Munich in the first round, were drawn against Slavia Prague of the Czech Republic.

Slavia were impressive 5-2 aggregate winners over Malmö of Sweden in the first round.

SV Hamburg, who put Celtic to the sword, face Spartak Moscow who knocked out Silkeborg of Denmark 5-3 on aggregate.

Helsingborgs of Sweden, whose defence proved too tight for Aston Villa, tackle Neuchatel Xamax of Switzerland, who knocked out Dynamo Kiev 2-1 on aggregate.

Inter Milan, not so impressive against French minnows Guingamp in the first round, were given



Jerome Leroy (centre) of Paris Saint Germain trips over Harry Zech (left) of FC Vaduz as Patrick Hefti (right) watches during early action in their Cup Winners' Cup match (Reuters photo)



Liverpool soccer star Stig Inge Bjornebye (right) evades the tackle of Finland's MYPA-47's Jukka Koskinen (left) in the UEFA European Cup Winners' Cup (Reuters photo)

another chance to improve when they drew Casino Graz. The Austrians overcame Ekeren of Belgium on the away goals rule.

Borussia Moenchengladbach of Germany, conquerors of Arsenal, play the London side manager Arsene Wenger's old club Monaco.

Metz, who won only their second ever European game in seven years, against Tirol Innsbruck Tuesday, drew

Sporting Lisbon, who put out another French side, Montpellier, in the first round.

Monaco coach Jean Tigana was disappointed at being paired with Moenchengladbach.

"I would have preferred to go to Scotland, Austria, even Romania. We'll just have to get used to the idea of going to Germany. Luckily the return match is at home," he said.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Wright attacks Pleat

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal striker Ian Wright could face the wrath of the Football Association after an extraordinary attack on Sheffield Wednesday manager David Pleat. Wright reportedly branded Pleat "a pervert" after the Wednesday boss protested to the FA for two alleged incidents involving the Arsenal forward in the recent Premiership game at Highbury which the Gunners won 4-1. Pleat called for an inquiry after Wright was caught on television pulling the dreadlocks of Wednesday's Dutchman, Regi Blinker, and stamping on Yugoslav defender Dejan Stefanovic. But Wright, who Thursday was put on stand-by for England's World Cup qualifying match against Poland at Wembley on October 9, denies the accusations. "He can do what he likes. He can report me to the FA, but I just ask why is he doing it," Wright told the Daily Mail. "But if I do have to appear at the FA, I'll have my say about David Pleat. He's a pervert — and you can print that." Wright was referring to newspaper revelations nine years ago that Pleat was cautioned by police three times for kerb-crawling. The publicity forced him to resign as Tottenham manager. The FA, who have been sent a video of the game by Pleat, were today considering Wright's reported comments before deciding whether to take any action.

Royle charged by FA

LONDON (AFP) — Everton manager Joe Royle was Friday charged by the Football Association with bringing the game into disrepute. The FA acted following comments Royle made to referee David Elleray last weekend after the English Premiership match against Blackburn. Everton got a point from a 1-1 draw at Ewood Park, but Royle was furious at seeing striker Duncan Ferguson sent off for dissent in the final minutes of the match. He has 14 days in which to respond and indicate whether he would like a personal hearing. Royle is the second Premiership manager this week to be hauled up on a disrepute charge. Coventry boss Ron Atkinson, along with his assistant Gordon Strachan, is also on the carpet after incidents during a match with Chelsea in August.

Carson still in intensive care

LONDON (AFP) — Willie Carson remained in intensive care in hospital Friday, a week after suffering serious injury in a frightening incident at Newbury. A spokeswoman for the North Hampshire Hospital in Basingstoke said this morning: "Mr. Carson's condition is unchanged. He is still in the intensive care unit." The 53-year-old jockey was admitted to the hospital after being hurt in the paddock at Newbury last Friday. He was kicked in the stomach by his intended mount Meshbed and is being treated for severe liver injuries.

King pays \$9 million for Lewis title fight

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — American promoter Don King snapped up the World Boxing Council heavy-weight championship Mike Tyson turned his back on when he bid \$9 million Thursday.

Britain's former WBC heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, whom Tyson had refused to fight, will probably tackle Oliver McCall on November 9. WBC president Jose Sulaiman said when he announced the result of the purse offers.

That is the same day Tyson is scheduled to put his World Boxing Association title on the line against Evander Holyfield in Las Vegas.

King bid \$9,152,992 while Lewis's backers, Pannix, submitted \$6,151,000.

Lewis had to wait for a chance to regain the WBC title he lost to McCall in September 1994 while first fellow Briton Frank Bruno and then Tyson claimed the crown.

Lewis's manager Frank Maloney, present for the opening of the bids, said: "I'm absolutely amazed. Don King has given Lennox another big pay day."

King was obliged to pay Lewis, the leading WBC contender, four million dollars in compensation for standing aside while Tyson fought Bruce Seldon for the WBA title on September 7 when Tyson won in the first round.

Lewis vowed: "I'm going to win the title and bring it back to Britain."

His chance comes courtesy of Tyson's decision to

take on former undisputed champion Holyfield for the WBA title ahead of Lewis, the official WBC challenger.

Maloney believes Tyson will eventually have to fight Lewis.

"Mike Tyson wants to take some easier routes," Maloney claimed.

"But maybe after that he'll realise that the public want to see him in a real fight and then he'll come to the table to take on Lennox Lewis, as long as Lennox stays undefeated up until then."

Lewis could make his bid to regain the WBC heavy-weight crown on British soil after all.

Although King earned the rights for the fight, the American promoter may decide to stage the contest for the vacant title between Lewis and McCall in England.

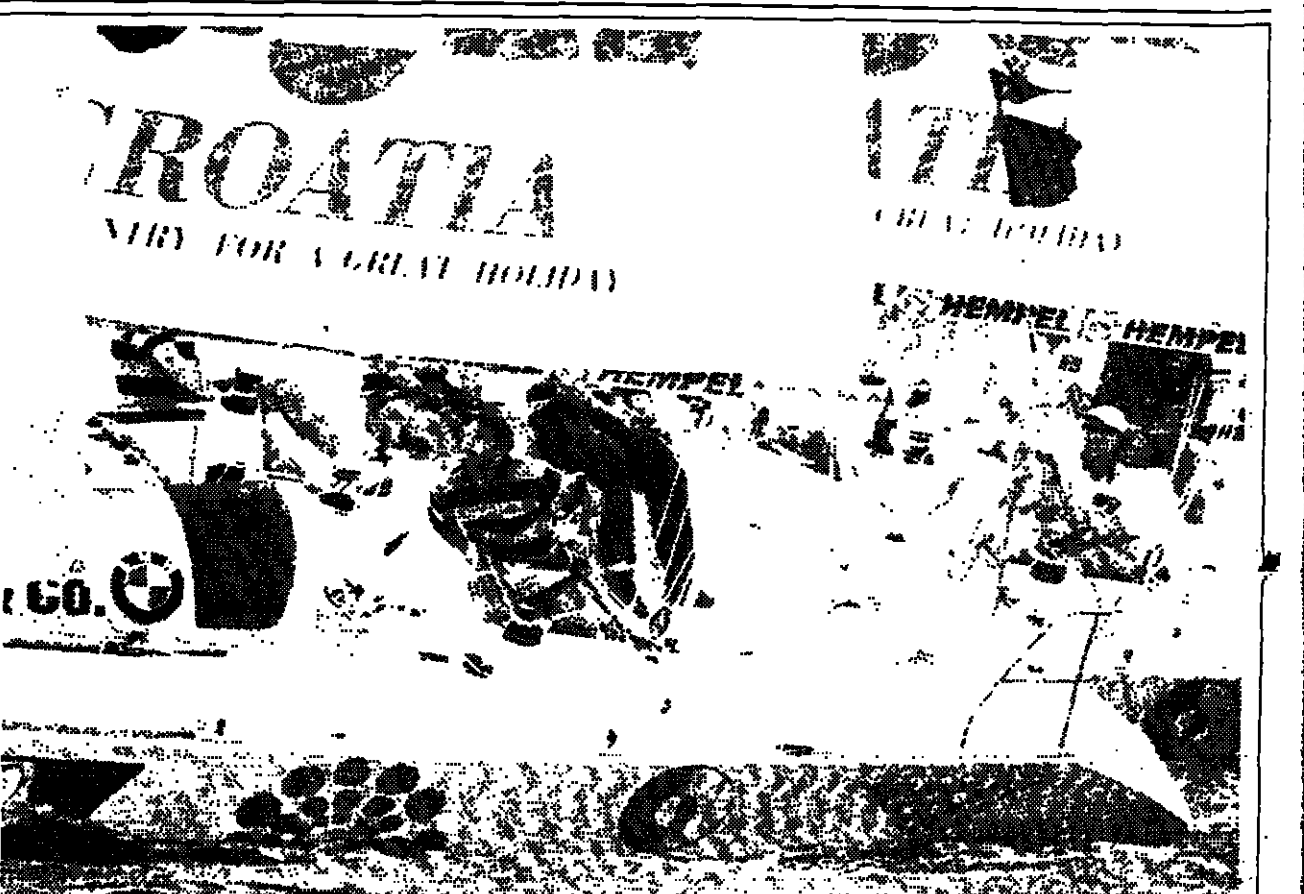
"King has got seven days to tell us where he intends to stage the fight," Lewis's promoter, Panos Elaides, told BBC radio.

"The only chance he has of making any money is to bring the fight to England."

King's original intention was to stage the fight on the Tyson bill in Las Vegas on November 9.

However, Elaides believes that McCall will need more time to get fit.

"A more likely date is December 6," he added.



Dutch skipper Roy Heimer takes the advantage against U.S. skipper Ed Baird at the start of the World Yachting Championship match race 15. Skipper Ed Baird and his crew are leading the championship after race 14 (Reuters photo)

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Novak surprises Becker at Swiss tourney

BASLE (AFP) — Jiri Novak of the Czech Republic stunned fourth-seeded Boris Becker 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) in the second round of the Swiss indoor tennis championship Thursday night.

Novak, 21, played almost entirely from the back court but continually sent passing shot winners past his German opponent, who was playing his first tournament since injuring his right wrist at Wimbledon.

Becker looked lethargic and had to save three match points in the ninth game of the second set.

Novak kept his cool after that missed opportunity, however, and sealed his win with some searing service returns.

Only two seeds are now left in the last eight of the tournament and at least one unseeded player will make the final.

In another surprise, lucky loser Marc Goellner of Germany rode his powerful serve to score a 7-6 (9/7), 6-2 second-round win over veteran No. 6 seed Stefan Edberg of Sweden, who had troubles with his own serve and was feeling unwell.

"Stefan always looked tired," Goellner said. World number one Pete Sampras overcame tenacious German teenager Tommy Haas in three sets to progress.

Sampras downed 18-year-old wild card recipient Haas 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 to set up a last eight meeting with swedes Mikael Tillstrom, who defeated his compatriot Jonas Bjorkman 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.



Boris Becker

The American, who denied reports he is suffering from a blood disorder, said the medium-paced courts in Basle suit his game.

"It is a good court," he said. "It is not so fast that you can't stay back."

Haas has been described by his American coach Nick Bollettieri as potentially better than his compatriots Boris Becker and Michael Stich but Sampras, though impressed, was not prepared to back up that statement.

"It is hard to say how good he can become because he is still very young," said the top seed. "He's got a pretty good foundation — he's a solid player and he moves well but it is hard to say he's going to be a better player than Becker."

Hendrik Dreekmann — who upset his German compatriot Michael Stich in the first round — advanced with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 win over former Grand Slam Cup winner Magnus Larsson of Sweden, while

Petr Korda of the Czech Republic beat Germany's David Prinosil 6-4, 6-2.

Prinosil had upset second-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia in the first round.

In other second-round matches played Thursday, third-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia downed Frenchman Lionel Roux 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 and Olivier Delaite of France ousted Italian Davis Cup player Renzo Furlan 1-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Players press ahead with strike ballot

LONDON (R) — Players in the three lower English soccer divisions could still strike over a satellite television cash dispute which has divided players on one side and the football league on the other.

The two sides are deeply entrenched in the row which centres on the League's scrapping of their traditional regulation, by which the players union was entitled to receive 10 per cent of television money.

The league's TV deal with sky, for live coverage of matches outside the Premier League, is worth 125 million pounds over five years but officials say the union does not need a huge increase in money while the clubs, particularly those in the lower divisions, say they desperately do.

The union is insisting the league should honour their long-standing agreement to pay out the 10 per cent share and are threatening strike action from the start of November, targeting isolated games scheduled to be screened live on satellite TV.

They were sending out ballot forms to their members on Friday seeking support for strike action. League spokesman Chris Hull said on Friday talks had been "progressing" and accused the union of ignoring financial realities and pursuing a policy that would harm their members.

Asmussen lines up Oscar Schindler for Arc

PARIS (AFP) — Cash Asmussen is set to ride Irish St Leger winner Oscar Schindler in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe a week on Sunday.

Stephen Crane rode the colt to victory at the Curragh last Saturday but appears to have been passed over for Longchamp and also for the four-year-old's planned tilt at the Melbourne Cup afterwards.

"It's 99 per cent certain I ride Oscar Schindler," Asmussen said.

"He won impressively the other day and has run well all year. I think the horse is a live Arc prospect and I look forward to riding him."

The Texan, now based in France, won the Arc on Suave Dancer in 1991. He won the French Oaks on Sil Sila for

Brian Smart in June and the Prix Vermeille on the RAE guest-trained My Emma a fortnight ago.

"I have had a lot of luck in big races with horses trained in the British Isles this season. Let's hope I can pull off the treble with Oscar Schindler," he said.

Trainer Kevin Prendergast is keen to aim Oscar Schindler at the Melbourne Cup after the Arc and he was expected to use Michael Kinane, the Irish jockey who won Australia's premier race on Vintage Crop two years ago.

"It makes sense to have Mick for Melbourne," he said.

"He's won the race and knows the track, having ridden in the Melbourne Cup three times."



Toronto Blue Jay's Alex Gonzalez finds himself out at third after being tagged by Baltimore Orioles third baseman Todd Zelle while trying to stretch a double during the 3rd inning September 26 at the Skydome in Toronto. Making the call on the play is third base umpire Jim McKean. Baltimore went on to win 4-1 (Reuters photo)

Leaders Betis face unbeaten Deportivo; PSG aim to continue impressive run as AC Milan face Perugia

PARIS (AFP) — Spanish League leaders Real Betis face a tough home tie against unbeaten Deportivo La Coruna this weekend in the top match of the Spanish League programme.

Betis lead Barcelona on goal difference, having conceded just one goal in their four league matches to date, and are scoring over two goals a game.

There were doubts last season that the Deportivo coach, former Welsh international manager and Liverpool idol John Toshack, would be retained for this season.

However, the board allowed Toshack to heavily rebuild the side, which came close twice to winning the championship and won the 1995 Spanish Cup under former coach Arsenio Iglesias — and they are starting to see the fruits of his efforts.

Coruna drew their first two matches, but have comfortably won their last two games, including a 2-0 away win at title holders

Atletico Madrid.

Particularly encouraging for Toshack, who resigned from the Wales post after only one match in 1994, has been the form of French playmaker Corentin Martins.

Martins, signed from Auxerre in the summer, is their joint top scorer with three goals alongside another new signing: 5 million pound (\$7.5million) Brazilian striker Rivaldo.

Betis have been bolstered by the arrival in the summer of Nigerian midfielder Finidi George from Dutch champions Ajax — they beat Real Madrid for his signature. His partnership with Robert Jarni, normally Croatia's leftback, in midfield is the major reason behind Betis' exciting start.

Barcelona should face an easier task away at Real Zaragoza, the 1995 Cup Winners' Cup. The Catalan club scraped through 3-2 against Real Sociedad at home last Sunday, but it was the form of Brazilian wonderkid Ronaldo that

took the eye.

Ronaldo, signed for \$20 million from PSV Eindhoven, scored a double to take his total to three for the season, and Zaragoza will also be aware that Barcelona's other striker Juan Antonio Pizzi, the Argentinian-born naturalised Spaniard signed from Tenerife, looked impressive scoring the other goal.

Zaragoza are a shadow of the side that defeated Arsenal 2-1 in the Cup Winners' Cup final. Their hero on that night, Nayim, was sent off last week after coming on at halftime as a substitute during their 2-0 defeat to moderate Sporting Gijon.

In Germany, Borussia Moenchengladbach will try to build on their impressive week's work by beating

Fortuna Dusseldorf away. Borussia's 5-1 demolition of champions Borussia Dortmund and then their gutsy 3-2 defeat of Arsenal (6-4 on aggregate) in the UEFA Cup have boosted the club's morale after losing their opening two league matches.

Former German international Stefan Effenberg may force national team coach Berti Vogts to rethink his policy of refusing to play him in the side. Vogts sent Effenberg home from the 1994 World Cup after he made obscene gestures to the spectators when he was substituted, against South Korea. Vogts said that Effenberg would not play for Germany as long as he was coach.

Vogts was a spectator at Moenchengladbach's destruction of Dortmund

last weekend and cannot fail to have been impressed.

Dortmund attempt to revive their league challenge at home to struggling St Pauli, while Bayern Munich, dumped out of the UEFA Cup this week by Valencia, are away at the 1993 champions Werder Bremen.

In France, leaders Paris Saint Germain take their exceptional record of not conceding a goal so far, to Guingamp.

Even more impressive has been the play of their Brazilian duo Rai and Leonardo, both members of the 1994 World Cup winning squad.

Both were on the mark in the 4-0 thrashing of Lens last weekend, Leonardo scoring a brace to make it four league goals this sea-

son.

Guingamp, the 1996 League Cup finalists, held Italian giants Inter Milan to a highly creditable 1-1 draw at Milan in the UEFA Cup Tuesday, although they went out 4-1 on aggregate.

Guingamp will rely on veteran Romanian defender George Mihali to stop the rampant Brazilian duo while their Liberian playmaker Yordan Letchkov, French international Reynald Pedros and German keeper Andreas Kopke.

The Marseille fans booed the side off the pitch at their last home game, a 1-0 win over Le Havre, and will expect them to improve considerably against Bordeaux.

In Italy, AC Milan could find themselves top of the first division this weekend

in Bordeaux's surprising unbeaten start to the season.

He has scored four goals for last season's beaten UEFA Cup finalists, who lost most of their first team over the summer.

Marseille have made a disappointing start to the season, lying ninth on 12 points, despite having recruited high profile players such as Bulgarian playmaker Yordan Letchkov, French international Reynald Pedros and German keeper Andreas Kopke.

The Marseille fans booed the side off the pitch at their last home game, a 1-0 win over Le Havre, and will expect them to improve considerably against Bordeaux.

In Italy, AC Milan could find themselves top of the first division this weekend

after a remarkable recovery by the champions.

Two weeks ago, the club was in crisis after consecutive defeats in the Champions League and the league.

Now, after two consecutive victories, highlighted by Marco Simone's masterful hat-trick against Rosenborg in the Champions League, Silvio Berlusconi's club are poised to leapfrog back to the top.

On Sunday, they face host newly-promoted Perugia and should take maximum points in the cauldron of the San Siro Stadium.

Simone and Liberian strike partner George Weah, who between them have scored 14 goals in six League and Cup matches this season, both came through Wednesday night's triumph unscathed.

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WEST: ♠ 8 6 2, ♥ Q 3, ♦ 7 5 4, ♣ 9 9 3. EAST: ♠ K J 10 9 4 3, ♥ Q 10 5 3 2, ♦ Q, ♣ 6.

SOUTH: ♠ A 7, ♥ 9, ♦ J 8 2, ♣ A K 10 7 4 2.

The bidding: NORTH 17, 20, 30, 30. EAST 2A, 2A, 3NT, 3NT. SOUTH 2A, 3NT, 3NT, 3NT. WEST Pass, Pass, Pass, Pass.

Opening lead: Two of ♠. Minor lapses of technique are not usually punished drastically. That was not the case on this hand from the Forbo tournament played earlier this year in Holland. At one table North-South reached an iron-clad contract of five clubs. Declarer made 12 tricks easily by ruffing a spade in dummy, losing only one trick to the queen of clubs.

At the other table, North-South stumbled into three no trump on the bidding shown after East made a weak jump overall in spades.

West led a low spade and declarer won the ace. Which minor suit should South tackle first?

Declarer chose to go after the nine-card club suit rather than the combined eight cards in diamonds. When the queen of clubs failed to drop under the ace-king, declarer took the percentage play in diamonds by running the eight since there was no entry back to the closed hand. East won the queen and the defenders collected five spade tricks and a club for a three-trick set.

Going after clubs was correct, but declarer should have taken one preliminary precaution. Before cashing the high clubs, declarer should have played off one high diamond. When the queen drops, declarer simply cashes winning tricks and rucks up 10 tricks. If the queen of diamonds does not drop, declarer then tests clubs. When that lady fails to appear, declarer can fall back on the diamond finesse in an attempt to land the game.

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(MODIFICATION NO 1) Invitation to Central Tender

No. 154/96

Study, Design and Preparation of Tender Documents for the Inspection & Repair of Berths at Aqaba Port

1. Delete item No. (5) of the original invitation and substitute by the following:

"Members of each association are requested to provide with their offers a letter of intent duly signed by all members of the association stating that the association is committed to submit a duly legalised association agreement similar to enclosed association sample agreement provided in the documents, on award and before contract signature provided that the Foreign International consultant will be the leader.

2. This modification shall be part of the pre-qualification documents.

Chairman of the Central Committee,
Director General
Eng. Naser Madadha

World leaders appeal for end to Israeli-Palestinian violence

Arab World condemns Israeli actions; hardliners hail armed Palestinian response

France, Britain and Germany urge Netanyahu-Arafat talks

Combined agency dispatches

THE LEADERS of France, Britain and Germany made an unprecedented joint appeal to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Friday to meet immediately to calm violence raging in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In almost identical letters to the two leaders, President Jacques Chirac, Prime Minister John Major and Chancellor Helmut Kohl said: "We are sending you a joint, solemn appeal to make the necessary calming gestures."

Mr. Chirac's office released the French text. The three main west European powers called for "an immediate resumption of negotiations at the highest level" and the full implementation of agreements already reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

They noted with satisfaction what they called a decision to close a controversial Israeli archaeological tunnel under the Old City of Jerusalem, which sparked the outbreak of violence, and called for other measures to be taken in the same spirit.

The joint text said Europeans were deeply concerned that the violence could endanger the entire Middle East peace process. At least 53 Arabs and 13 Israelis have been killed in three days of widespread bloodshed.

In the first such joint statement by the European Union's (EU) "big three," issued in consultation with the EU's current Irish presidency, the leaders appealed to the statesmanship of Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat "to ensure that wisdom and peace prevail in the interest of the peoples of the region."

Israel's use of helicopter gunships to fire on Palestinian demonstrators on the West Bank was sharply criticised by a senior diplomat from the EU's Irish presidency.

"You can't, in circumstances where civilians are at risk use heavy weapons of this kind indiscriminately," said Denis O'Leary, Dublin's ambassador in Brussels.

The attack contrasted with the more neutral tone of an official EU statement on the Middle East crisis which urged restraint on both parties and avoided direct criticism of Israel.

It came as the European Commission said it would ask EU foreign ministers on Tuesday to approve a mandate for a partnership accord with the Palestinians "as a further gesture of support."

Because the Palestinian territories have no formal legal status, the accord, which mirrors an EU-Israel agreement signed last year, will be concluded between the EU and the PLO.

Commission officials, however, ruled out any move to suspend the EU-Israel accord in protest at Israel's handling of the current crisis.



AMMAN PROTEST: Protesters organised by Jordanian women's groups stage a demonstration on Friday condemning Israeli actions in Jerusalem and the Israeli army's violence against Palestinians (see story on page 3) (Reuters photo)

The accord can be suspended if either party is involved in human rights abuses but commission officials said this clause could not be used to sanction Israel for its policing of the West Bank and Gaza, where it is the administrative power.

"The human rights clause is not there to judge political power," the statement expressed "grave concern" at the violent clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian police and urged both parties to exercise restraint and return to the negotiating table.

"The European Union views with disquiet the current fragility of the peace process and the evident crisis of confidence among Palestinian and Arab states. The recent incidents

serve to underline the fact that there is no alternative to pressing on with the peace process." The statement went on to reiterate the union's view that lasting peace will only be achieved on the basis of the Madrid and Oslo accords, under which Israel undertook to exchange land-for-peace process with the aim of achieving real and substantive progress, through the implementation of the agreements already reached and by moving to the next stage of negotiations as set down in the Oslo accords."

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(Continued on page 7)

Iraq urges continued revolt;

Combined agency dispatches

WHILE EGYPT led Arab efforts Friday to rescue the embattled Middle East peace process, hardline states such as Iraq fanned the flames of Muslim anger over Israeli moves in Jerusalem.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak hoped to host talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Cairo on Sunday, but no decision had been taken yet, Egyptian sources said.

Frodded by the United States, Egypt and other countries, the Israeli authorities sought, meanwhile, to ease the immediate cause of unprecedented clashes in the Palestinian territories by temporarily closing an archaeological tunnel near Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque.

But the violence continued on Friday and the Israeli mayor of Jerusalem announced that the closure was just temporary and the tunnel would reopen on Sunday.

The tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, has not only enraged the Palestinians but also infuriated Israel's peace partners Egypt and Jordan as well as negotiating partners Syria and Lebanon.

It has also prompted Qatar, which this year began normalising ties with Israel, to cancel a scheduled meeting between its foreign minister and his Israeli

counterpart. The tunnel opening has also brought the United States, co-sponsor of the peace talks, under attack from the Arabs who charge Washington has failed to bring Israel into line and given opportunities to hardliners trying to wreck the process.

Iraq's ruling Revolutionary Command Council and Baath Party leadership, at a meeting chaired by President Saddam Hussein, urged Arabs and Muslims to "fan the flames of the Palestinian revolution until Palestine is liberated."

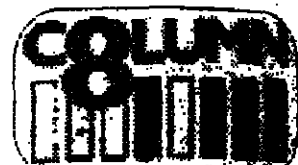
Iraq, which fired dozens of Scud missiles at Israel during the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf war over Kuwait, asked Arab and Muslim countries to "support the Palestinian people according to their means."

"It is time for the Arab World to rethink its stand towards Iraq, so it can return with its weight in order to support the Arabs' struggle against the plans set by imperialism and Zionism," said the statement issued jointly by the two main ruling bodies.

Al-Riyadh newspaper, which reflects the Saudi government's view, asked the Arabs to suspend their peace agreements with Israel "so that historic confrontation becomes the only alternative to the Zionist challenge."

It also warned that the violence "threatens to spread to all Arab states

(Continued on page 7)



Chateau snub for UAE leader's wife

GRENOBLE, France (AFP) — A French court has withdrawn planning permission for an extension to a chateau owned by the wife of the president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — even though the work has already been done. Fatima Bint Mubarak Al Kutbi has just added a separate kitchen wing and underground car park at the castle in the Savoie region near the Swiss border, covering a total of 1,332 square metres. She obtained formal planning permission for the work before going ahead. But the local administrative court, ruling on a petition by neighbours, have said the new construction, on the chateau perched on a hillside above the village of Vétraz-Monthoux, is unlawful. In particular neighbours protested about the clearing of a protected wooded area, which was not included in the plans approved by authorities last year. "This project has compromised the wooded area in question, and is not compatible with the categorisation which had been requested," the local administrative tribunal said. The planning permission accorded by the local town hall was therefore cancelled and the council ordered to pay 3,000 francs (\$600) to the locals who complained. Unless an agreement is reached, the latter are now entitled to take legal action leading to the demolition of the kitchen and garage extension. UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan owns another chateau a few kilometres away in the village of Monnetier-Montreix.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Kabariti lauds police work

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Friday visited Amman police directorate where he met with Brigadier General Hisham Ensour and other police officials. Mr. Kabariti, accompanied by Public Security Department Director General Nasouh Muheiddin, voiced appreciation for police personnel for their efforts to unveil the mystery of the death of Hanin and Hani Masri, two children whose father has admitted to have poisoned them.

Jordan signs NPT

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan on Thursday signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha signed the treaty on behalf of the Jordanian government.

50 dead in Nile ferry sinking

MINYA (AFP) — Divers retrieved 11 bodies on Friday after some 50 passengers drowned when their overloaded ferry sank in the Nile River after a funeral. Egyptian police said. Among those identified were three brothers and four of their nephews, after the tragedy on Thursday night in the Minya province of southern Egypt. The ferry sank because it had 75 passengers on board the ferry, although it was not supposed to carry more than 30, police said. The passengers were returning home from a funeral at another village across the river. About 20 passengers were able to jump from the ferry and swim ashore. Some 40 bodies were still believed to be trapped on the river-bed under the ferry.

PKK frees 3 foreigners

ANKARA (AFP) — Kurdish separatist guerrillas in eastern Turkey released Friday three foreign tourists they had apparently been holding, a Turkish security source said. The three foreigners — a Polish couple and an Iranian man — were released at around 9:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) near the village of Dallitepe in the Bingol region, close to where they had been seized, the source added. The three were questioned by police in Bingol in the afternoon, the source added, without elaborating. The tourists had been driving near the village of Bilalolu when they were stopped late Monday by armed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels, said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity. The source said it was not clear if the foreigners were actually kidnapped or went away with the guerrillas voluntarily.

5 killed in Mogadishu warfare

MOGADISHU (AFP) — At least five people died and several others were wounded when rival militias loyal to Somali faction leader Hussein Aidede and his rival Osman Ali Atto traded machine gun fire in

south Mogadishu, witnesses said Friday. Mr. Atto's radio accused Aidede's militiamen of firing artillery shells on positions held by his fighters. The victims were mainly civilians who were killed or wounded when stray shells landed in the Arwada neighbourhood of south Mogadishu. Meanwhile, two other people were killed and four wounded during clashes between Abgal and Habr Gedir clan militiamen in Maguuto village, 20 kilometres south of Mogadishu on Friday. The violence was reportedly sparked by a dispute over banana trade.

Iran ends military exercises

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards and Islamic militia ended exercises on Friday designed to prepare them for a larger manoeuvre dubbed "the way to Jerusalem" to be held later this year, an Iranian general said. General Mohsen Rezaei, the head of the elite force known as Pasdaran, said 50,000 guards and volunteer militiamen had taken part in the last of nine manoeuvres in a desert area 45-kilometres west of Tehran. The exercises "have given us more self-confidence, and we can now resist world oppressors with strength," he said, referring to Iran's arch enemies — Israel and the United States. The general, quoted by Iran's official news agency IRNA, said hundreds of tanks, planes, helicopters and armoured vehicles were used in the exercises. The idea was to make the troops battle-hardened and able to fight in desert conditions, he added. Some 350,000 guards and militiamen have been trained to take part in "Tariq Al Quds" (the way to Jerusalem) manoeuvre to be held later this year.

Israeli killed in Santo Domingo

SANTO DOMINGO (AFP) — An Israeli diplomat was shot dead on a street of the Dominican Republic's capital, in what the Israeli foreign ministry said Friday was a botched attempt to snatch his wife's handbag. The ministry said Aviv Cohen, a second secretary at the Israeli embassy, tried to defend his wife in the attack late Thursday but the robber opened fire to escape. According to an initial investigation, the shooting was not believed to be politically motivated or linked to the deadly clashes in the Palestinian territories, the ministry said. Police here said that Mr. Cohen was shot from a moving motorcycle while he was walking in the residential district of Cienfuegos de Maria, some 20 blocks from his embassy. He was pronounced dead on arrival in hospital. Government officials, police officers and embassy personnel declined to make any further statement. But police sources said the victim was not robbed of the money, jewels and documents he was carrying. Witnesses to the shooting gave a description of the lone murderer, they said.

Assad in good health — Syrian officials

BEIRUT (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad is in good health, according to Syrian officials quoted in the Arab press Friday, responding to claims to the contrary by Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Ciller. Officials said Mr. Assad appears continually on Arab and foreign television screens when he receives political personalities and is always gay and smiling, in comments reported by the Saudi daily Al Sharq Al Awsat, printed in Beirut.

On Thursday, Mrs. Ciller, also Turkey's foreign minister, said in Washington that she lacked details on the Syrian leader's health, but that according to unconfirmed reports, he was not in the best of Mrs. Ciller, made her comment in response to a question from an Israeli reporter after she met Israel's Foreign Minister David Levy at the Turkish mission.

The reporter asked her to comment on reports that Turkey had informed other states that Mr. Assad may be "very ill" and she responded, "well, we have gotten some information along those lines ... but we don't know if that is true or not." She declined to elaborate. Comments on Mr. Assad's health show the stupidity of those who make them and those who repeat them, said the Syrian officials in Sharq Al Awsat.

The officials also said the U.S. television network CNN had conducted an interview with Mr. Assad lasting several hours, although they did not give the date of the broadcast.

Shortly after Mrs. Ciller's statement at the National Press Club, a senior U.S. official said the United States had no indication that Mr. Assad was ill, and expressed surprise at Mrs. Ciller's statement.

Bosnia vote recount ruled out

SARAJEVO (R) — The final authority for Bosnian elections on Friday rejected a recommendation by its own appeals body that ballots cast in national elections on Sept. 14 be recounted.

"The Provisional Election Commission (PEC) is of the unanimous opinion that an additional physical recount of all ballots... is neither a practical nor a necessary response to the concerns raised," its official decision read.

The PEC was established by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which was charged by the Dayton peace agreement with organising Bosnia's first post-war national elections.

Hanged Najibullah was cold war relic

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghanistan's former President Najibullah, executed in Kabul on Friday by Taleban militia after they seized the capital, was a relic of the cold war.

The man known as the "butcher of Kabul" for his alleged proclivity for killing opponents, many by his own hand, was hanged and strung up from a traffic control post at the gates of the presidential palace.

Najibullah, 49, had been a virtual prisoner at a U.N. compound in Kabul for 4-1/2 years when he was killed along with his brother, Shahpur Ahmadzai.

In a visit to Kabul early this year, then-U.N. special envoy for Afghanistan Mahmud Mestiri said he believed the former president should be allowed to go free.

"I hope some day things will be calm enough in this country that we could have Najibullah free again," he said. "He deserves to be free. I don't know if he was a good man, but he is a man of good will."

But that was not to be. President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government, which had spared Najibullah's life and left a decision about his fate to the future, crumbled before the latest Taleban sweep through eastern Afghanistan.

Najibullah was ousted on April 15, 1992, when the Mujahideen guerrilla forces closed in on Kabul after 14 years of civil war against a Soviet-backed communist government.

The PEC's own election appeals sub-commission earlier on Friday called for a recount based on the suspiciously high number of votes which were cast in the elections.

"The PEC was told that it would have taken a hundred people about two weeks to recount the ballots and they (PEC) decided it just wasn't necessary," said an OSCE source. "It would have delayed certification of the final results and delayed installation of the new government too."

The PEC announced that a series of recalculation had been carried out on the ballots and that minor discrepancies had been corrected without any change in final results.

Aliens on the way, says UFO expert

ZURICH (R) — Erich Von Danaeken, known for his claims that space aliens visited earth thousands of years ago, said giant unidentified flying objects (UFOs) like those in the Hollywood blockbuster movie "Independence Day" would appear in reality in the next decade.

The Swiss author, who argues that ancient monuments were built by outer-space visitors, said the aliens would likely come in peace, unlike their movie counterparts who attack mankind.

"But they could also be aggressive if they are locked in interstellar competition and need our resources," Mr. Von Danaeken told the Swiss tabloid Blick.

"Humanoid beings will come in the next ten years. They are observing us now," he said.

Mr. Von Danaeken said the aliens were assessing the risks they would face from human weapons and diseases and would then contact "state leaders, world religions or the United Nations."

"Independence Day," which has set box office records in the United States, tells the tale of invading aliens defeated by a world coalition of nations led by the United States.

Police seize gold-plated pharaonic statues

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian construction worker who was trying to sell two gold-plated ivory pharaonic statues for one million pounds (\$340,000) has been arrested, the government daily Al Akhbar said Thursday. He was nabbed by undercover police agents who posed as potential customers after a tip-off that a construction worker was trying to find buyers for two antiquities. Al Akhbar said. One of the statues represents King Khafre of the old kingdom (2700-2190 BC) and the other represents Horus, one of the most important gods during the Greco-Roman period who took the shape of a falcon. The newspaper, which did not identify the worker nor say when the arrest took place, said that the man had badly damaged the Khafre statue by removing its crown to try and sell it separately. He also melted the gold at the base of the statue, it said.

Missing girls found in Netherlands; man arrested

COLOGNE, Germany (AFP) — Four German schoolgirls missing since Wednesday have been found safe and sound in the Netherlands and a truck-driver wanted for kidnapping them has been arrested. Cologne Police announced Friday. The girls aged 10 to 12, including a pair of twins, were last seen Wednesday afternoon at a playground in this western city, sparking a major police hunt for them. The girls, who were found in the car of the 45-year-old man from Cologne, a former companion of the twins' mother, were expected to be returned home later in the day. Police had suspected the girls were taken away by the man, allegedly already known for sexual offences against minors, although they had also left behind a note suggesting they had decided to run away.